THE
POETICAL WORKS
OF
JOHN SHEFFIELD,
DUKE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

To which is prefixed

THE LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

Cooke's Edition.

Muſe! 'tis enough! at length thy labour ends,
And thou ſhalt live; for *Buckingham* commends.
This more than pays whole years of thankleſs pain
Time, health, and fortune are not loſt in vain,
Sheffield approves: conſenting Phœbus bends,
And I and Malice from this hour are friends.

Pope's Miſcellanies.

EMBELLISHED WITH SUPERB ENGRAVINGS.

London:
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THE

POETICAL WORKS

OF

JOHN SHEFFIELD,

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

CONTAINING HIS

ESSAY ON POETRY,	EPISTLES,
ODES,	ELEGIES,
SONGS,	CHORUSES,

&c. &c. &c.

Of all those arts in which the wise excel,
Nature's chief master-piece is writing well:
No writing lifts exalted man so high,
As sacred and soul-moving poesy:
No kind of work requires so nice a touch,
And, if well finish'd, nothing shines so much.

Essay on Poetry.

London:
PRINTED AND EMBELLISHED
Under the Direction of
C. COOKE.

LIFE OF SHEFFIELD,

DUKE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE.

JOHN SHEFFIELD, descended from a long line of illustrious ancestors, was born in 1649. His father, Edmund Earl of Mulgrave, was grandson of Edmund, second Earl of Mulgrave, and died in 1658. His mother, Elizabeth, daughter of Lionel, Earl of Middlesex, marrying Lord Ossulston, soon after the death of his father, the young Lord was committed to the care of a preceptor, with whom he was so little satisfied, that he soon caused him to be dismissed; and, at an age not exceeding twelve years, resolved to become his own tutor, and dedicate a certain number of hours every day to the prosecution of his studies. Dr. Johnson observes, that "such a purpose, formed at such an age, and successfully prosecuted, delights as it is strange, and instructs as it is real." So intent was he in his application, that he acquired a degree of learning which justly entitled him to the reputation, he ever after maintained, of being a polite scholar; and his literary acquisitions are the more wonderful, as those years, in which they are commonly made, were spent by him in the tumult of a military life, or the gaiety of a court.

When war was declared against the Dutch, he went, at the age of seventeen, on board the ship in which Prince Rupert and the Duke of Albemarle sailed with the command of the fleet; but as, by contrariety of winds, they were restrained from action, he had no opportunity of signalizing his courage. His zeal for the king's service, however, was recompensed by the command of one of the independent troops of horse, then raised to protect the coast.

At the age of eighteen he received a summons to parliament, which the Earl of Northumberland censured as at least indecent, and his objection was allowed.

When another Dutch war broke out (1672) he went again a volunteer in the ship commanded by Lord Ossory, who represented the behaviour of the young nobleman, in the famous engagement off Solebay, in so favourable a light, that he was advanced to the command of the Royal Catharine. He afterwards raised a regiment of foot, and commanded it as colonel. The land forces were sent on shore by Prince Rupert, and he lived in the camp very familiarly with Schomberg. He was then appointed colonel of the old Holland regiment, together with his own, and had the promise of a garter, which he obtained in his twenty-fifth year; when, in order to learn the art of war under the great Marshal Turenne, he went into the French service, in which he made only one campaign.

Though he entered on the poſſeſſion of a large eſtate in an age when pleaſure was more in faſhion than buſineſs, he proſecuted his ſtudies amidſt the allurements of diſſipation; and, whilſt making his way to civil and military employments, ſuitable to his high birth and polite accompliſhments, he was never wholly negligent of literature, but cultivated poetry, in which he muſt have riſen to a conſiderable degree of eminence, if it be true, as reported, that, when he was not yet twenty years old, his recommendation advanced Dryden to the laurel, vacant by the death of Davenant.

In 1680, when Tangier was beſieged by the Moors, he was ſent with two thouſand men to its relief. The voyage, though attended with much danger, was proſperouſly performed; and the conſequence of this expedition was the retreat of the Moors, and the blowing up of Tangier.

During this voyage he compoſed the 'Viſion,' which, conſidering the dangers he was in, affords a ſtriking inſtance of innate magnanimity. At his return he recovered the king's favour, and, forgetting the ill offices done him, continued a wit and a courtier as before.

At the acceſſion of king James II. with whom he lived in great familiarity, he was immediately admitted into the privy council, and made Lord Chamberlain. He accepted a place in the High Commiſſion, without knowledge, as he declared, after the Revolution, of its illegality. Having few religious ſcruples, he attended the king to maſs, and kneeled with the reſt of the congregation, but had no diſpoſition to receive the Romiſh faith, or to force it upon others.

He acquieſced in the Revolution, though he did not promote it; and it is recorded that there was a deſign of aſſociating him in the invitation of the prince of Orange, but the Earl of Shrewſbury diſcouraged the attempt, by declaring that Mulgrave would never concur. This King William afterwards told him, and aſked what he would have done if the propoſal had been made? "Sire," ſaid he, "I would have diſcovered it to the king whom I then ſerved." To this King William replied, "My Lord, I cannot blame you."

When the crown was ſettled upon William and Mary, he voted for the conjunctive ſovereignty, upon the principle, that he thought the titles of the prince and his conſort equal. This vote gratified King William; yet, either by the king's diſtruſt, or his own diſcontent, he lived ſome years without employment. He was, notwithſtanding this averſion or indifference, made Marquis of Normandy in 1694, but ſtill oppoſed the court in ſome important queſtions; yet at laſt he was received into the cabinet council, with a penſion of three thouſand ounds.

At the acceſſion of Queen Anne, to whom he is ſaid to have made love when they were both young, he was highly favoured. Before her coronation in 1702, ſhe made him Lord Privy Seal, and ſoon after Lord Lieutenant of the North Riding of Yorkſhire, and one of the Governors of the Charter-Houſe. He was then named Commiſſioner for treating with the Scots about the Union, and was made, next year, firſt, Duke of Normandy, and then of Buckinghamſhire.

Soon after, becoming jealous of the Duke of Marlborough, he reſigned the privy ſeal, and joined the diſcontented Tories in a motion extremely offenſive to the Queen, for inviting the princeſs Sophia to England. The Queen, however, courted him back with an offer no leſs than that of the chancellorſhip, which he refuſed. He now retired from public buſineſs, and built that houſe in St. James Park, which is the preſent Queen's, upon ground granted by the crown.

When the miniſtry was removed in 1710, to make way for the Tory party, he was made lord ſteward of the houſehold, and concurred in all the tranſactions of the new adminiſtration. On the death of the Queen, and the acceſſion of King George I. he became a conſtant opponent of the court, and having no public employment, amuſed himſelf by writing his two tragedies, 'Julius Cæſar,' and 'Marcus Brutus,' which, though never acted, were intended for the ſtage, and to be performed after the manner of the ancients, with muſical choruſſes between the acts. They were both taken from Shakeſpear's tragedy of 'Julius Cæſar,' but produced with great alterations.

In 1719, he wrote the 'Election of a Laureat,' occaſioned by the appointment of Euſden to the office of poet-laureat, on the death of Rowe. Euſden's promotion gave great offence, perhaps unjuſtly; for as the firſt rate poets were then in oppoſition to government, or in higher ſituations, it was neceſſary to beſtow the laurel on one of inferior rank. Euſden was probably equal to any of his competitors. His writings, though they do not diſcover great poetical genius, afford no juſt ground for the imputation of dulneſs, and ought to have exempted him from the ſevere cenſure of Sheffield and Pope.

"In ruſh'd Euſden, and cry'd who ſhall have it
But I, the true laureat, to whom the king gave it?
Apollo begg'd pardon, and granted his claim,
But vow'd that, till then, he ne'er heard of his name."

He died at Buckingham-houſe, on the 24th of February 1720-21, and was buried in Weſtminſter Abbey, where a monument is erected to his memory.

He was thrice married. By his two firſt wives he had no children: by his third, who was the daughter of king James, by the Counteſs of Dorcheſter, and the widow of the Earl of Angleſea, he had, beſides other children that died early, a ſon, born in 1716, who died at Rome, in 1735, and put an end to the line of Sheffield. His epitaph is written by Pope. It is remarkable that the Duke's three wives were all widows. The Ducheſs died in 1742.

His works, conſiſting of 'Poems,' 'Hiſtorical Memoirs,' 'Speeches,' 'Characters,' 'Critical Obſervations,' and 'Eſſays,' were collected and printed by Alderman Barber, in two volumes quarto, 1723. They have been ſince reprinted, in two volumes octavo, 1729, with the omiſſion of ſome offenſive particulars relating to the Revolution.

As a ſtateſman, our author is characteriſed by a ſteady attachment to Tory principles of government, which is chiefly aſcribed to the perſonal obligations he was under to the Royal Family of Stuart. As a courtier, he is diſtinguiſhed by perſonal dignity, gracefulneſs, and good-breeding. He poſſeſſed wit, ſpirit, gallantry, and politeneſs, in an eminent degree.

If credit may be given to the eulogies of Dryden, Garth, Prior, Addiſon, and Pope, he ranked high in the liſt of poetical writers. But it may be juſtly doubted, whether he was not indebted to his patronage of men of genius for a greater ſhare of his reputation than was derived from the intrinſic merit of his productions. Dr. Warton unequivocally declares his reputation was owing to his rank, and cites, as applicable to Sheffield, the following lines, written by Pope, but not in alluſion to our author.

"What woeful ſtuff this madrigal would be
In ſome ſtarv'd hackney ſonneteer, or me;
But, let a lord once own the happy lines,
How the wit brightens, how the ſtyle refines!"

He cultivated an early acquaintance with Dryden, whoſe help he was always ſuppoſed to have had in the 'Eſſay on Satire,' and the 'Verſion from Ovid,' and who has offered him the moſt extravagant adulation in the dedications to his Virgil and Aurengzebe.

He was among the firſt to acknowledge the merit of Pope, and uſhered in the publication of his poems with a recommendatory copy of verſes, which received the praiſe, and excited the emulation, of Lord Harcourt, and other admirers of our Engliſh Homer.

"Great Sheffield's muſe the long proceſſion heads,
And throws a luſtre o'er the pomp ſhe leads;

Firſt gives the palm ſhe fir'd him to obtain,
Crowns his gay brow, and ſhews him how to reign."

Pope himſelf ſeems to have valued this copy of verſes very highly, and ſpeaks of Sheffield's commendation as the conſummation of his fame.

" Muſe! 'tis enough; at length thy labour ends,
And thou ſhalt live, for Buckingham commends."

Beſides this profeſſed teſtimony of gratitude, Pope has incidentally mentioned his obligations to him in his poems, and embelliſhed his tragedy of Brutus with two choruſſes.

Of his other poetical pieces, the 'Eſſay on Poetry' is the moſt diſtinguiſhed. It ſeems to have been his favourite production, and is ranked by Addiſon (Spectator, No. 253) with Roſcommon's 'Eſſay on Tranſlated Verſe,' and Pope's 'Eſſay on Criticiſm.' Though the verſification is careleſs, the ſenſe is always clear, and the rules are commonly juſt, often delivered with eaſe, and ſometimes with energy.—It is juſtly ranked amongſt our beſt didactic poems.

Of the character of our author, perſonal and poetical, Dr. Johnſon gives the following deſcription.

" His character is not to be propoſed as worthy of imitation. His religion he may be ſuppoſed to have learned from Hobbes, and his morality was ſuch as naturally proceeds from looſe opinions. His ſentiments with reſpect to women he picked up in the court of Charles, and his principles concerning property were ſuch as a gaming table ſupplies. He was cenſured as covetous, and has been defended by an inſtance of inattention to his affairs, as if a man might not at once be corrupted by avarice and idleneſs. He is ſaid, however, to have had much tenderneſs, and to have been very ready to apologize for his violences of paſſion.

" If we credit the teſtimony of his contemporaries, he was a poet of no vulgar rank: but favour and flattery are now at an end; criticiſm is no longer ſoftened by his bounties, nor awed by his ſplendour, and, being able to take a more ſteady view, diſcovers him to be a writer that ſometimes glimmers, but rarely ſhines; feebly laborious, and, at beſt, but pretty. His ſongs are upon common topics. He hopes, and grieves, and repents, and deſpairs, and rejoices, like any other maker of little ſtanzas: to be great he hardly tries; to be gay is hardly in his power.

" In his 'Eſſay on Satire' he was always ſuppoſed to have had the help of Dryden. His 'Eſſay on Poetry' is the great work for which he was praiſed by Roſcommon, Dryden, and Pope; and doubtleſs by many more, whoſe eulogies

have periſhed. Upon this piece he appears to have ſet a high value, for he was all his life improving it, by ſucceſſive reviſals, ſo that there is ſcarcely any poem to be found, of which the laſt edition differs more from the firſt. Amongſt other changes, mention is made of ſome compoſitions of Dryden, which were written after the firſt appearance of the Eſſay.

"At the time when this work firſt appeared, Milton's fame was not yet fully eſtabliſhed, and therefore Taſſo and Spenſer were ſet before him. The two laſt lines were theſe: The epic poet, ſays he,

"Muſt above Milton's lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where great Torquato, and where greater Spenſer fail."

"The laſt line, in ſucceeding editions, was ſhortened, and the order of names continued; but now Milton is advanced to the higheſt place, and the paſſage thus adjuſted.

Muſt above Taſſo's lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where Spenſer, and e'en Milton fail."

"Amendments are ſeldom made without ſome token of a rent: *lofty* does not ſuit Taſſo ſo well as Milton.

"One celebrated line ſeems to be borrowed. The Eſſay calls a perfect character—

"A faultleſs monſter, which the world ne'er knew."

"Scaliger, in his poem, terms Virgil *ſine labe monſtrum*.—Sheffield can hardly be ſuppoſed to have read Scaliger's poetry; perhaps he found the words in a quotation.

"Of this Eſſay, which Dryden has exalted ſo highly, it may be juſtly ſaid, that the precepts are judicious, ſometimes new, and often happily expreſſed; but there are, after all the emendations, many weak lines, and ſome ſtrange appearances of negligence, as when he gives the laws of elegy, he inſiſts upon connexion and coherence, without which, ſays he,

"'Tis epigram, 'tis point, 'tis what you will,
But not an elegy, nor writ with ſkill,
No Panegyric, nor a Cooper's Hill."

"Who would not ſuppoſe that Waller's Panegyric, and Denham's Cooper's Hill, were elegies?

"His verſes are often inſipid, but his memoirs are lively and agreeable; he had the perſpicuity and elegance of an hiſtorian, but not the fire and fancy of a poet."

To the Memory of

JOHN SHEFFIELD DUKE OF BUCKINGHAMSHIRE,

These his more lasting Remains (the Monument of his Mind, and more perfect Image of himself) are here collected by the Direction of

CATHARINE HIS DUCHESS;

Desirous that his Ashes may be honoured, and his Fame and Merit committed to the Test of Time, Truth, and Posterity.

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* AN ESSAY ON POETRY.

OF all those arts in which the wise excel,
Nature's chief master-piece is writing well:
No writing lifts exalted man so high,
As sacred and soul-moving poesy:
No kind of work requires so nice a touch,
And, if well finish'd, nothing shines so much,
But heaven forbid we should be so profane,
To grace the vulgar with that noble name.
'Tis not a flash of fancy, which sometimes
Dazzling our minds, sets off the slightest rhymes;
Bright as a blaze, but in a moment done:
True wit is everlasting, like the sun,
Which, though sometimes behind a cloud retir'd,
Breaks out again, and is by all admir'd.
Number and rhyme, and that harmonious sound,
Which not the nicest ear with harshness wound,
Are necessary, yet but vulgar arts;
And all in vain these superficial parts
Contribute to the structure of the whole,
Without a genius too; for that's the soul:
A spirit which inspires the work throughout,
As that of nature moves the world about;
A flame that glows amidst conceptions fit;
Ev'n something of divine, and more than wit;
Itself unseen, yet all things by it shown,
Describing all men, but describ'd by none.
Where dost thou dwell? what caverns of the brain
Can such a vast and mighty thing contain?
When I, at vacant hours, in vain thy absence mourn,
Oh! where dost thou retire? and why dost thou return,

* The "Essay on Satire," which was written by Sheffield and Dryden, is printed among the poems of the latter.

Sometimes with powerful charms to hurry me away,
From pleaſures of the night, and buſineſs of the day?
Ev'n now, too far tranſported, I am fain
To check thy courſe, and uſe the needful rein.
As all is dulneſs, when the fancy's bad;
So, without judgment, fancy is but mad:
And judgment has a boundleſs influence
Not only in the choice of words, or ſenſe,
But on the world, on manners, and on men;
Fancy is but the feather of the pen;
Reaſon is that ſubſtantial uſeful part,
Which gains the head, while t'other wins the heart.
Here I ſhall all the various ſorts of verſe,
And the whole art of poetry rehearſe;
But who that taſk would after Horace do?
The beſt of maſters, and examples too!
Echoes at beſt, all we can ſay is vain;
Dull the deſign, and fruitleſs were the pain.
'Tis true, the ancients we may rob with eaſe;
But who with that mean ſhift himſelf can pleaſe,
Without an actor's pride? A player's art
Is above his who writes a borrow'd part.
Yet modern laws are made for later faults,
And new abſurdities inſpire new thoughts:
What need has ſatire then to live on theft,
When ſo much freſh occaſion ſtill is left?
Fertile our ſoil, and full of rankeſt weeds,
And monſters worſe than ever Nilus breeds.
But hold, the fools ſhall have no cauſe to fear;
'Tis wit and ſenſe that is the ſubject here:
Defects ſo witty men deſerve a cure,
And thoſe who are ſo, will ev'n this endure.
Firſt then, of ſongs: which now ſo much abound,
Without his ſong no fop is to be found;
A moſt offenſive weapon, which he draws
On all he meets, againſt Apollo's laws.
Though nothing ſeems more eaſy, yet no part
Of poetry requires a nicer art;
For as in rows of richeſt pearl there lies
Many a blemiſh that eſcapes our eyes,

The leaſt of which defects is plainly ſhown
In one ſmall ring, and brings the value down:
So ſongs ſhould be to juſt perfection wrought;
Yet where can one be ſeen without a fault?
Exact propriety of words and thought;
Expreſſion eaſy, and the fancy high;
Yet that not ſeem to creep, nor this to fly;
No words tranſpos'd, but in ſuch order all,
As wrought with care, yet ſeem by chance to fall.
Here, as in all things elſe, is moſt unfit,
Bare ribaldry, that poor pretence to wit;
Such nauſeous ſongs by a late author * made,
Call an unwilling cenſure on his ſhade.
Not that warm thoughts of the tranſporting joy
Can ſhock the chaſteſt, or the niceſt cloy;
But words obſcene, too groſs to move deſire,
Like heaps of fuel, only choke the fire.
On other themes he well deſerves our praiſe;
But palls that appetite he meant to raiſe.
Next, elegy, of ſweet, but ſolemn voice,
And of a ſubject grave, exacts the choice;
The praiſe of beauty, valour, wit contains;
And there too oft' deſpairing love complains:
In vain, alas! for who by wit is mov'd?
That phœnix ſhe deſerves to be belov'd;
But noiſy nonſenſe, and ſuch ſops as vex
Mankind, take moſt with that fantaſtic ſex.
This to the praiſe of thoſe who better knew;
The many raiſe the value of the few.
But here (as all our ſex too oft have try'd)
Women have drawn my wandering thoughts aſide.
Their greateſt fault, who in this kind have writ,
Is not defect in words, or want of wit;
But ſhould this muſe harmonious numbers yield,
And every couplet be with fancy fill'd;
If yet a juſt coherence be not made
Between each thought; and the whole model laid
So right, that every line may higher riſe,
Like goodly mountains, till they reach the ſkies:

* The Earl of Rocheſter.

Such trifles may perhaps of late have paſt,
And may be lik'd awhile, but never laſt;
'Tis epigram, 'tis point, 'tis what you will,
But not an elegy, nor writ with ſkill,
No † panegyric, nor a ‡ Cooper's-hill.
A higher flight, and of a happier force,
Are odes: the muſes' moſt unruly horſe,
That bounds ſo fierce, the rider has no reſt;
Here foams at mouth, and moves like one poſſeſs'd:
The poet here muſt be indeed inſpir'd,
With fury too, as well as fancy fir'd.
Cowley might boaſt to have perform'd this part,
Had he with nature join'd the rules of art;
But ſometimes diction mean, or verſe ill-wrought,
Deadens, or clouds, his noble frame of thought.
Though all appear in heat and fury done,
The language ſtill muſt ſoft and eaſy run.
Theſe laws may ſound a little too ſevere;
But judgment yields, and fancy governs here,
Which, though extravagant, this muſe allows,
And makes the work much eaſier than it ſhows.
Of all the ways that wiſeſt men could find
To mend the age, and mortify mankind,
Satire well-writ has moſt ſucceſsful prov'd,
And cures, becauſe the remedy is lov'd.
'Tis hard to write on ſuch a ſubject more,
Without repeating things ſaid oft' before!
Some vulgar errors only we'll remove,
That ſtain a beauty which we ſo much love.
Of choſen words ſome take not care enough,
And think they ſhould be as the ſubject rough;
This poem muſt be more exactly made,
And ſharpeſt thoughts in ſmootheſt words convey'd.
Some think, if ſharp enough, they cannot fail,
As if their only buſineſs was to rail:
But human frailty nicely to unfold,
Diſtinguiſhes a ſatyr from a ſcold.
Rage you muſt hide, and prejudice lay down;
A ſatyr's ſmile is ſharper than his frown;

† Waller's. ‡ Denham's

So while you ſeem to ſlight ſome rival youth,
Malice itſelf may paſs ſometimes for truth.
The Laureat * here may juſtly claim our praiſe,
Crown'd by Mack Flecknoe † with immortal bays;
Yet once his Pegaſus ‡ has borne dead weight,
Rid by ſome lumpiſh miniſter of ſtate.
Here reſt, my muſe, ſuſpend my cares a while,
A more important taſk attends thy toil.
As ſome young eagle, that deſigns to fly
A long unwonted journey through the ſky,
Weighs all the dangerous enterpriſe before,
O'er what wide lands and ſeas ſhe is to ſoar,
Doubts her own ſtrength ſo far, and juſtly fears
The lofty road of airy travellers,
But yet incited by ſome bold deſign,
That does her hopes beyond her fears incline,
Prunes every feather, views herſelf with care,
At laſt, reſolv'd, ſhe cleaves the yielding air;
Away ſhe flies, ſo ſtrong, ſo high, ſo faſt,
She leſſens to us, and is loſt at laſt:
So (though too weak for ſuch a weighty thing)
The muſe inſpires a ſharper note to ſing.
And why ſhould truth offend, when only told
To guide the ignorant, and warn the bold?
On then, my muſe, advent'rouſly engage
To give inſtructions that concern the ſtage.
The unities of action, time, and place,
Which, if obſerv'd, give plays ſo great a grace,
Are, though but little practis'd, too well known
To be taught here, where we pretend alone
From nicer faults to purge the preſent age,
Leſs obvious errors of the Engliſh ſtage.
Firſt then, ſoliloquies had need be few,
Extremely ſhort, and ſpoke in paſſion too.
Our lovers talking to themſelves, for want
Of others, make the pit their confidant;
Nor is the matter mended yet, if thus
They truſt a friend, only to tell it us;

* Dryden.
† A famous ſatirical poem of his.
‡ A poem called, The Hind and Panther.

Th' occaſion ſhould as naturally fall,
As when Bellario * confeſſes all.
Figures of ſpeech, which poets think ſo fine,
(Art's needleſs varniſh to make nature ſhine)
All are but paint upon a beauteous face,
And in deſcriptions only claim a place:
But, to make rage declaim, and grief diſcourſe,
From lovers in deſpair fine things to force,
Muſt needs ſucceed; for who can chooſe, but pity
A dying hero, miſerably witty?
But oh! the dialogues, where jeſt and mock
Is held up like a reſt at ſhuttle-cock,
Or elſe, like bells, eternally they chime,
They ſigh in ſimile, and die in rhyme.
What things are theſe who would be poets thought,
By nature not inſpir'd, nor learning taught?
Some wit they have, and therefore may deſerve
A better courſe than this, by which they ſtarve:
But to write plays! why, 'tis a bold pretence
To judgment, breeding, wit, and eloquence:
Nay, more; for they muſt look within, to find
Thoſe ſecret turns of nature in the mind:
Without this part, in vain would be the whole,
And but a body all, without a ſoul.
All this united, yet but makes a part
Of dialogue, that great and powerful art,
Now almoſt loſt, which the old Grecians knew,
From whom the Romans fainter copies drew,
Scarce comprehended ſince, but by a few.
Plato and Lucian are the beſt remains
Of all the wonders which this art contains;
Yet to ourſelves we juſtice muſt allow,
Shakſpeare and Fletcher are the wonders now:
Conſider them, and read them o'er and o'er;
Go ſee them play'd; then read them as before;
For though in many things they groſsly fail,
Over our paſſions ſtill they ſo prevail,
That our own grief by theirs is rock'd aſleep;
The dull are forc'd to feel, the wiſe to weep.

* In Philaſter, a play of Beaumont and Fletcher.

Their beauties imitate, avoid their faults.
Firſt, on a plot employ thy careful thoughts;
Turn it with time, a thouſand ſeveral ways;
This oft', alone, has given ſucceſs to plays.
Reject that vulgar error (which appears
So fair) of making perfect characters;
There's no ſuch thing in nature, and you'll draw
A faultleſs monſter which the world ne'er ſaw.
Some faults muſt be, that his misfortunes drew,
But ſuch as may deſerve compaſſion too.
Beſides the main deſign compos'd with art,
Each moving ſcene muſt be a plot apart;
Contrive each little turn, mark every place,
As painters firſt chalk out the future face:
Yet be not fondly your own ſlave for this,
But change hereafter what appears amiſs.
Think not ſo much where ſhining thoughts to place,
As what a man would ſay in ſuch a caſe:
Neither in comedy will this ſuffice,
The player too muſt be before your eyes!
And, though 'tis drudgery to ſtoop ſo low,
To him you muſt your ſecret meaning ſhow.
Expoſe no ſingle ſop, but lay the load
More equally, and ſpread the folly broad;
Mere coxcombs are too obvious; oft' we ſee
A fool derided by as bad as he:
Hawks fly at nobler game; in this low way
A very owl may prove a bird of prey.
Small poets thus will one poor ſop devour;
But to collect, like bees, from every flower,
Ingredients to compoſe that precious juice,
Which ſerves the world for pleaſure and for uſe,
In ſpite of faction this would favourget;
But Falſtaff * ſtands inimitable yet.
Another fault which often may befall,
Is, when the wit of ſome great poet ſhall
So overflow, that is, be none at all,
That ev'n his fools ſpeak ſenſe, as if poſſeſt,
And each by inſpiration breaks his jeſt.

* The matchleſs character of Shakſpeare.

If once the juſtneſs of each part be loſt,
Well may we laugh, but at the poet's coſt.
That ſilly thing men call ſheer-wit avoid,
With which our age ſo nauſeouſly is cloy'd:
Humour is all; wit ſhould be only brought
To turn agreeably ſome proper thought.
But ſince the poets we of late have known
Shine in no dreſs ſo much as in their own,
The better by example to convince,
Caſt but a view on this wrong ſide of ſenſe.
First, a ſoliloquy is calmly made,
Where every reaſon is exactly weigh'd;
Which once perform'd, moſt opportunely comes
Some hero frighted at the noiſe of drums;
For her ſweet ſake, whom at firſt ſight he loves,
And all in metaphor his paſſion proves:
But ſome ſad accident, though yet unknown,
Parting this pair, to leave the ſwain alone,
He ſtrait grows jealous, though we know not why;
Then, to oblige his rival, needs will die:
But firſt he makes a ſpeech, wherein he tells
The abſent nymph how much his flame excels;
And yet bequeaths her generouſly now
To that lov'd rival whom he does not know!
Who ſtrait appears; but who can fate withſtand?
Too late, alas! to hold his haſty hand,
That juſt has given himſelf the cruel ſtroke!
At which his very rival's heart is broke:
He, more to his new friend than miſtreſs kind,
Moſt ſadly mourns at being left behind;
Of ſuch a death prefers the pleaſing charms
To love, and living in a lady's arms.
What ſhameful and what monſtrous things are theſe
And then they rail at thoſe they cannot pleaſe;
Conclude us only partial to the dead,
And grudge the ſign of old Ben Johnſon's head;
When the intrinſic value of the ſtage
Can ſcarce be judg'd but by a following age:
For dances, flutes, Italian ſongs, and rhyme,
May keep up ſinking nonſenſe for a time;

But that muſt fail, which now ſo much o'er rules,
And ſenſe no longer will ſubmit to fools.
By painful ſteps at laſt we labour up
Parnaſſus' hill, on whoſe bright airy top
The epic poets ſo divinely ſhow,
And with juſt pride behold the reſt below.
Heroic poems have juſt a pretence
To be the utmoſt ſtretch of human ſenſe;
A work of ſuch ineſtimable worth,
There are but two the world has yet brought forth!
Homer and Virgil! with what ſacred awe
Do thoſe mere ſounds the world's attention draw!
Juſt as a changeling ſeems below the reſt
Of men, or rather is a two-legg'd beaſt;
So theſe gigantic ſouls amaz'd we find
As much above the reſt of human kind!
Nature's whole ſtrength united! endleſs fame,
And univerſal ſhouts, attend their name!
Read Homer once, and you can read no more,
For all books elſe appear ſo mean, ſo poor,
Verſe will ſeem proſe; but ſtill perſiſt to read,
And Homer will be all the books you need.
Had Boſſu never writ, the world had ſtill,
Like Indians, view'd this wondrous piece of ſkill;
As ſomething of divine the work admir'd;
Not hope to be inſtructed, but inſpir'd:
But he, diſcloſing ſacred myſteries,
Has ſhown where all the mighty magic lies;
Deſcrib'd the ſeeds, and in what order ſown,
That have to ſuch a vaſt proportion grown.
Sure from ſome angel he the ſecret knew,
Who through this labyrinth has lent the clue.
But what, alas! avails it poor mankind,
To ſee this promis'd land, yet ſtay behind?
The way is ſhown, but who has ſtrength to go?
Who can all ſciences profoundly know?
Whoſe fancy flies beyond weak reaſon's ſight,
And yet has judgment to direct it right?
Whoſe juſt diſcernment, Virgil-like, is ſuch
Never to ſay too little or too much?

Let ſuch a man begin without delay;
But he muſt do beyond what I can ſay;
Muſt above Taſſo's lofty flights prevail,
Succeed where Spenſer, and ev'n Milton fail.

THE TEMPLE OF DEATH.

IN IMITATION OF THE FRENCH.

IN thoſe cold climates, where the ſun appears
Unwillingly, and hides his face in tears,
A diſmal vale lies in a deſert iſle,
On which indulgent heaven did never ſmile.
There a thick grove of aged cypreſs trees,
Which none without an awful horror ſees,
Into its wither'd arms, depriv'd of leaves,
Whole flocks of ill-preſaging birds receives:
Poiſons are all the plants that ſoil will bear,
And winter is the only ſeaſon there:
Millions of graves o'erſpread the ſpacious field,
And ſprings of blood a thouſand rivers yield;
Whoſe ſtreams, oppreſs'd with carcaſſes and bones,
Inſtead of gentle murmurs, pour forth groans.
Within this vale a famous temple ſtands,
Old as the world itſelf, which it commands;
Round is its figure, and four iron gates
Divide mankind, by order of the fates:
Thither in crowds come to one common grave,
The young, the old, the monarch and the ſlave.
Old age and pains, thoſe evils man deplores,
Are rigid keepers of th' eternal doors;
All clad in mournful blacks, which ſadly load
The ſacred walls of this obſcure abode;
And tapers, of a pitchy ſubſtance made,
With clouds of ſmoke increaſe the diſmal ſhade.
A monſter void of reaſon and of ſight
The goddeſs is, who ſways this realm of night:
Her power extends o'er all things that have breath;
A cruel tyrant, and her name is Death.
The faireſt object of our wondering eyes
Was newly offered up her ſacrifice;

The adjoining places where the altar ſtood,
Yet bluſhing with the fair Almeria's blood,
When griev'd Orontes, whoſe unhappy flame
Is known to all who e'er converſe with fame,
His mind poſſeſs'd by fury and deſpair,
Within this ſacred temple made this prayer:
Great Deity? who in thy hands doſt bear
That iron ſceptre which poor mortals fear;
Who, wanting eyes thyſelf, reſpecteſt none,
And neither ſpar'ſt the laurel nor the crown!
O thou, whom all mankind in vain withſtand,
Each of whoſe blood muſt one day ſtain thy hand!
O thou, who every eye that ſees the light
Cloſeſt for ever in the ſhades of night!
Goddeſs attend, and hearken to my grief,
To which thy power alone can give relief.
Alas! I aſk not to defer my fate,
But wiſh my hapleſs life a ſhorter date;
And that the earth would in its bowels hide
A wretch, whom Heaven invades on every ſide:
That from the ſight of day I could remove,
And might have nothing left me but my love.
Thou only comforter of minds oppreſt,
The port where wearied ſpirits are at reſt,
Conductor to Elyſium, take my life,
My breaſt I offer to thy ſacred knife:
So juſt a grace refuſe not, nor deſpiſe
A willing though a worthleſs ſacrifice.
Others (their frail and mortal ſtate forgot)
Before thy altars are not to be brought
Without conſtraint; the noiſe of dying rage,
Heaps of the ſlain of every ſex and age,
The blade all reeking in the gore it ſhed,
With ſever'd heads and arms confus'dly ſpread;
The rapid flames of a perpetual fire,
The groans of wretches ready to expire:
This tragic ſcene in terror makes them live,
Till that is forc'd which they ſhould freely give:
Yielding unwillingly what Heaven will have,
Their fears eclipſe the glory of their grave:

Before thy face they make indecent moan,
And feel a hundred deaths in fearing one:
Thy flame becomes unhallow'd in their breaſt,
And he a murderer who was a prieſt.
But againſt me thy ſtrongeſt forces call,
And on my head let all the tempeſt fall;
No mean retreat ſhall any weakneſs ſhow,
But calmly I'll expect the fatal blow;
My limbs not trembling, in my mind no fear,
Plaints in my mouth, nor in my eyes a tear.
Think not that time, our wonted ſure relief,
That univerſal cure for every grief,
Whoſe aid ſo many lovers oft have found,
With like ſucceſs can ever heal my wound:
Too weak the power of nature, or of art;
Nothing but Death can eaſe a broken heart:
And that thou may'ſt behold my helpleſs ſtate,
Learn the extremeſt rigour of my fate.

Amidſt th' innumerable beauteous train
Paris, the queen of cities, does contain,
(The faireſt town, the largeſt, and the beſt)
The fair Almeria ſhin'd above the reſt:
From her bright eyes to feel a hopeleſs flame,
Was of our youth the moſt ambitious aim;
Her chains were marks of honour to the brave,
She made a prince whene'er ſhe made a ſlave.
Love, under whoſe tyrannic power I groan,
Show'd me this beauty ere 'twas fully blown:
Her timorous charms, and her unpractis'd look,
Their firſt aſſurance from my conqueſt took;
By wounding me, ſhe learn'd the fatal art,
And the firſt ſigh ſhe had was from my heart:
My eyes, with tears moiſt'ning her ſnowy arms,
Render'd the tribute owing to her charms.
But, as I ſooneſt of all mortals paid
My vows, and to her beauty altars made;
So, among all thoſe ſlaves that ſigh'd in vain,
She thought me only worthy of my chain:
Love's heavy burden my ſubmiſſive heart
Endur'd not long, before ſhe bore her part;

My violent flame melted her frozen breaſt,
And in ſoft ſighs her pity ſhe expreſs'd;
Her gentle voice allay'd my raging pains,
And her fair hands ſuſtain'd me in my chains;
Ev'n tears of pity waited on my moan,
And tender looks were caſt on me alone.
My hopes and dangers were leſs mine than hers;
Thoſe fill'd her ſoul with joys, and theſe with fears;
Our hearts, united, had the ſame deſires.
And both alike burn'd with impatient fires.
Too faithful memory! I give thee leave
Thy wretched maſter kindly to deceive;
Oh, make me not poſſeſſor of her charms,
Let me not find her languiſh in my arms;
Paſt joys are now my fancy's mournful themes;
Make all my happy nights appear but dreams;
Let not ſuch bliſs before my eyes be brought,
O hide thoſe ſcenes from my tormenting thought;
And in their place diſdainful beauty ſhow;
If thou would'ſt not be cruel, make her ſo:
And, ſomething to abate my deep deſpair,
O let her ſeem leſs gentle, or leſs fair.
But I in vain flatter my wounded mind;
Never was nymph ſo lovely or ſo kind:
No cold repulſes my deſire ſuppreſt,
I ſeldom ſigh'd, but on Almeria's breaſt:
Of all the paſſions which mankind deſtroy,
I only felt exceſs of love and joy:
Uncumber'd pleaſures charm'd my ſenſe, and they
Were, as my love, without the leaſt allay.
As pure, alas! but not ſo ſure to laſt,
For, like a pleaſing dream, they are all paſt.
From heaven her beauties like fierce lightnings came,
Which break through darkneſs with a glorious flame;
Awhile they ſhine, awhile our minds amaze,
Our wondering eyes are dazzled with the blaze;
But thunder follows, whoſe reſiſtleſs rage
None can withſtand, and nothing can aſſuage;
And all that light which thoſe bright flaſhes gave,
Serves only to conduct us to our grave.

When I had juſt begun love's joys to taſte,
(Thoſe full rewards for fears and dangers paſt)
A fever ſeiz'd her, and to nothing brought
The richeſt work that ever nature wrought.
All things below, alas! uncertain ſtand;
The firmeſt rocks are fix'd upon the ſand:
Under this law both kings and kingdoms bend,
And no beginning is without an end.
A ſacrifice to Time, fate dooms us all,
And at the tyrant's feet we daily fall:
Time, whoſe bold hand will bring alike to duſt
Mankind, and temples too in which they truſt.
Her waſted ſpirits now begin to faint,
Yet patience ties her tongue from all complaint,
And in her heart as in a fort remains;
But yields at laſt to her reſiſtleſs pains.
Thus while the fever, amorous of his prey,
Through all her veins makes his delightful way,
Her fate's like Semele's; the flames deſtroy
That beauty they too eagerly enjoy.
Her charming face is in its ſpring decay'd;
Pale grow the roſes, and the lilies fade;
Her ſkin has loſt that luſtre which ſurpaſs'd
The ſun's, and well deſerv'd as long to laſt:
Her eyes, which us'd to pierce the hardeſt hearts,
Are now diſarm'd of all their flames and darts;
Thoſe ſtars now heavily and ſlowly move;
And ſickneſs triumphs in the throne of love.
The fever every moment more prevails,
Its rage her body feels, and tongue bewails:
She, whoſe diſdain ſo many lovers prove,
Sighs now for torment, as they ſigh for love,
And with loud cries, which rend the neighbouring air,
Wounds my ſad heart, and weakens my deſpair.
Both men and gods I charge now with my loſs,
And, wild with grief, my thoughts each other croſs.
My heart and tongue labour in both extremes,
This ſends up humble prayers, while that blaſphemes:
I aſk their help, whoſe malice I defy,
And mingle ſacrilege with piety.

But, that which muſt yet more perplex my mind,
To love her truly, I muſt ſeem unkind;
So unconcern'd a face my ſorrow wears,
I muſt refrain unruly floods of tears.
My eyes and tongue put on diſſembling forms,
I ſhow a calmneſs in the midſt of ſtorms;
I ſeem to hope when all my hopes are gone,
And, almoſt dead with grief, diſcover none.
But who can long deceive a loving eye,
Or with dry eyes behold his miſtreſs die?
When paſſion had with all its terrors brought
Th' approaching danger nearer to my thought,
Off on a ſudden fell the forc'd diſguiſe,
And ſhow'd a ſighing heart in weeping eyes:
My apprehenſions, now no more confin'd,
Expos'd my ſorrows, and betray'd my mind.
The fair afflicted ſoon perceives my tears,
Explains my ſighs, and thence concludes my fears:
With ſad preſages of her hopeleſs caſe,
She reads her fate in my dejected face;
Then feels my torment, and neglects her own,
While I am ſenſible of hers alone:
Each does the other's burden kindly bear;
I fear her death, and ſhe bewails my fear;
Though thus we ſuffer under Fortune's darts,
'Tis only thoſe of love which reach our hearts.
Meanwhile the fever mocks at all our fears,
Grows by our ſighs, and rages at our tears:
Thoſe vain effects of our as vain deſire,
Like wind and oil, increaſe the fatal fire.
Almeria then, feeling the deſtinies
About to ſhut her lips, and cloſe her eyes;
Weeping, in mine, fix'd her fair trembling hand,
And with theſe words I ſcarce could underſtand,
Her paſſion in a dying voice expreſs'd
Half, and her ſighs, alas! made out the reſt.
'Tis paſt; this pang—Nature gives o'er the ſtrife;
Thou muſt thy miſtreſs loſe, and I my life.
I die; but, dying thine, the fates may prove
Their conqueſt over me, but not my love:

Thy memory, my glory, and my pain,
In ſpite of death itſelf, ſhall ſtill remain.
Deareſt Orontes, my hard fate denies,
That hope is the laſt thing which in us dies:
From my griev'd breaſt all thoſe ſoft thoughts are fled,
And love ſurvives it, though my hope is dead;
I yield my life, but keep my paſſion yet,
And can all thoughts, but of Orontes, quit.
My flame increaſes as my ſtrength decays:
Death, which puts out the heat, the heart will raiſe:
That ſtill remains, though I from hence remove;
I loſe my lover, but I keep my love.
The ſighs which ſent forth that laſt tender word,
Up tow'rds the heavens like a bright meteor ſoar'd;
And the kind nymph, not yet bereft of charms,
Fell cold and breathleſs in her lover's arms.
Goddeſs, who now my fate haſt underſtood,
Spare but my tears, and freely take my blood:
Here let me end the ſtory of my cares;
My diſmal grief enough the reſt declares.
Judge thou by all this miſery diſplay'd,
Whether I ought not to implore thy aid:
Thus to ſurvive, reproaches on me draws;
Never ſad wiſhes had ſo juſt a cauſe.
Come then, my only hope; in every place
Thou viſiteſt, men tremble at thy face,
And fear thy name: once let thy fatal hand
Fall on a ſwain that does the blow demand.
Vouchſafe thy dart; I need not one of thoſe,
With which thou doſt unwilling kings depoſe:
A welcome death the ſlighteſt wound can bring,
And free a ſoul already on her wing.
Without thy aid, moſt miſerable I!
Muſt ever wiſh, yet not obtain to die.

THE VISION.

Written during a Sea Voyage, when ſent to command the Forces for the Relief of Tangier.

WITHIN the ſilent ſhades of ſoft repoſe,
Where Fancy's boundleſs ſtream for ever flows,
Where the infranchis'd ſoul at eaſe can play,
Tir'd with the toilſome buſineſs of the day;
Where princes gladly reſt their weary heads,
And change uneaſy thrones for downy beds;
Where ſeeming joys delude deſpairing minds;
And where ev'n jealouſy ſome quiet finds;
There I and Sorrow for a while could part;
Sleep clos'd my eyes, and eas'd a ſighing heart.
But here too ſoon a wretched lover found
In deepeſt griefs that ſleep can ne'er be found:
With ſtrange ſurpriſe my troubled fancy brings
Old antic ſhapes of wild unheard-of things;
Diſmal and terrible they all appear,
My ſoul was ſhook with an unuſual fear.
But as when viſions glad the eyes of ſaints,
And kind relief attends devout complaints,
Some beauteous angel in bright charms will ſhine,
And ſpread a glory round, that's all divine;
Juſt ſuch a bright and beauteous form appears,
The monſters vaniſh, and with them my fears.
The faireſt ſhape was then before me brought,
That eyes e'er ſaw, or fancy ever thought;
How weak are words to ſhew ſuch excellence,
Which ev'n confounds the ſoul, as well as ſenſe!
And, while our eyes tranſporting pleaſures find,
It ſtops not here, but ſtrikes the very mind.
Some angel ſpeaks her praiſe; no human tongue,
But with its utmoſt art muſt do her wrong.
The only woman that has power to kill,
And yet is good enough to want the will;
Who needs no ſoft alluring words repeat,
Nor ſtudy'd looks of languiſhing deceit.

Fantaſtic beauty, always in the wrong,
Still thinks ſome pride muſt to its power belong;
An air affected, and an haughty mien,
Something that ſeems to ſay, I would be ſeen.
But of all womankind this only ſhe,
Full of its charms, and from its frailty free,
Deſerves ſome nobler muſe her fame to raiſe,
By making the whole ſex beſide her pyramid of praiſe.
She, ſhe appear'd the ſource of all my joys,
The deareſt care that all my thoughts employs:
Gently ſhe look'd, as when I left her laſt,
When firſt ſhe ſeiz'd my heart, and held it faſt:
When, if my vows, alas! were made too late,
I ſaw my doom came not from her, but fate.
With pity then ſhe eas'd my raging pain,
And her kind eyes could ſcarce from tears refrain.
Why, gentle ſwain, ſaid ſhe, why do you grieve
In words I ſhould not hear, much leſs believe?
I gaze on that which is a fault to mind,
And ought to fly the danger which I find:
Of falſe mankind, though you may be the beſt,
Ye all have robb'd poor woman of their reſt.
I ſee your pain, and ſee it too with grief,
Becauſe I would, yet muſt not, give relief.
Thus, for a huſband's ſake, as well as yours,
My ſcrup'lous ſoul divided pain endures.
Guilty, alas! to both: for thus I do
Too much for him, yet not enough for you.
Give over then, give over, hapleſs ſwain,
A paſſion moving, but a paſſion vain:
Nor chance nor time ſhall ever change my thought;
'Tis better much to die, than do a fault.
Oh, worſe than ever! Is it then my doom
Juſt to ſee heaven, where I muſt never come?
Your ſoft compaſſion, if not ſomething more;
Yet I remain as wretched as before.
The wind indeed is fair, but ah! no ſight of ſhore.
Farewell, too ſcrup'lous fair one; oh, farewell;
What torments I endure, no tongue can tell:

A stranger appearance all in raiment white,
His form grave reverence, & his face delight,
Goodness and greatness in his eyes were seen,
Gentle his look and affable his mien.
Vide Sheffield's Poems The Vision Page 29.

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Thank heaven, my fate tranſports me now where I,
Your martyr, may with eaſe and ſafety die.
With that I kneel'd, and ſeiz'd her trembling hand,
While ſhe impos'd this cruel kind command:
Live, and love on; you will be true, I know;
But live then, and come back to tell me ſo;
For though I bluſh at this laſt guilty breath,
I can endure that better than your death.
Tormenting kindneſs! barbarous reprieve!
Condemn'd to die, and yet compell'd to live!
This tender ſcene my dream repeated o'er,
Juſt as it paſs'd in real truth before.
Methought I then fell grovelling to the ground,
Till, on a ſudden rais'd, I wond'ring found
A ſtrange appearance all in taintleſs white:
His form gave reverence, and his face delight;
Goodneſs and greatneſs in his eyes were ſeen,
Gentle his look, and affable his mien.
A kindly notice of me thus he took:
"What mean theſe flowing eyes, this ghaſtly look,
"Theſe trembling joints, this looſe diſhevell'd hair,
"And this cold dew, the drops of deep deſpair?"
With grief and wonder firſt my ſpirits faint,
But thus at laſt I vented my complaint:
Behold a wretch whom cruel fate has found,
And in the depth of all misfortunes drown'd.
'There ſhines a nymph, to whom an envy'd ſwain
Is ty'd in Hymen's ceremonious chain;
But, cloy'd with charms of ſuch a marriage bed,
And fed with manna, yet he longs for bread;
And will, moſt huſband-like, not only range,
For love perhaps of nothing elſe but change,
But to inferior beauty proſtrate lies,
And courts her love in ſcorn of Flavia's eyes.
All this I knew, (the form divine reply'd,)
And did but aſk to have thy temper try'd,
Which prove ſincere. Of both I know the mind;
She is too ſcrupulous, and thou too kind:
But ſince thy fatal love's for ever fix'd,
Whatever time or abſence come betwixt:

Since thy fond heart ev'n her diſdain prefers
To others' love, I'll ſomething ſoften her's:
Elſe in the ſearch of virtue ſhe may ſtray:
Well-meaning mortals ſhould not loſe their way.
She now indeed ſins on the ſafer ſide,
For hearts too looſe are never to be ty'd;
But no extremes are either good or wiſe,
And in the midſt alone true virtue lies.
When marriage-vows unite an equal pair,
'Tis a mere contract made by human care,
By which they both are for convenience ty'd,
The bridegroom yet more ſtrictly than the bride:
For circumſtances alter very ill,
And woman meets with moſt temptation ſtill;
She a forſaken bed muſt often bear,
While he can never fail to find her there,
And therefore leſs excus'd to range elſewhere.
Yet this ſhe ought to ſuffer, and ſubmit:
But when no longer for each other fit,
If uſage baſe ſhall juſt reſentment move,
Or, what is worſe, affronts of wandering love,
No obligation after that remains,
'Tis mean, not juſt, to wear a rival's chains.
Yet decency requires the wonted cares
Of int'reſt, children, and remote affairs;
But in her love, that dear concern of life,
She all the while may be another's wife:
Heaven, that beholds her wrong'd and widow'd bed,
Permits a lover in her huſband's ſtead.
I flung me at his feet, his robes would kiſs,
And cry'd—Ev'n our baſe world is juſt in this;
Amidſt our cenſures, love we gently blame,
And love ſometimes preſerves a female fame.
What tie leſs ſtrong can woman's will reſtrain?
When honour checks, and conſcience pleads in vain;
When parents' threats, and friends' perſuaſions fail,
When int'reſt and ambition ſcarce prevail,
To bound that ſex when nothing elſe can move,
They'll live reſerv'd, to pleaſe the man they love!

The ſpirit then reply'd to all I ſaid,
She may be kind, but not till thou art dead;
Bewail thy memory, bemoan thy fate:
Then ſhe will love, when 'tis, alas! too late.
Of all thy pains ſhe will no pity have,
Till ſad deſpair has ſent thee to the grave.

Amaz'd, I wak'd in haſte,
All trembling at my doom:
Dreams oft' repeat adventures paſt,
And tell our ills to come.

THE RAPTURE.

I YIELD, I yield, and can no longer ſtay
My eager thoughts, that force themſelves away.
Sure none inſpir'd (whoſe heat tranſports them ſtill
Above their reaſon, and beyond their will)
Can firm againſt the ſtrong impulſe remain;
Cenſure itſelf were not ſo ſharp a pain.
Let vulgar minds ſubmit to vulgar ſway;
What ignorance ſhall think, or malice ſay,
To me are trifles; if the knowing few,
Who can ſee faults, but can ſee beauties too,
Applaud that genius which themſelves partake,
And ſpare the poet for the muſe's ſake.
The muſe, who raiſes me from humble ground,
To view the vaſt and various world around;
How faſt I mount! in what a wondrous way
I grow tranſported to this large ſurvey!
I value earth no more, and far below
Methinks I ſee the buſy pigmies go.
My ſoul entranc'd is in a rapture brought
Above the common tracks of vulgar thought:
With fancy wing'd, I feel the purer air,
And with contempt look down on human care.
Airy ambition, ever ſoaring high,
Stands firſt expos'd to my cenſorious eye.
Behold ſome toiling up a ſlippery hill,
Where, though arriv'd, they muſt be toiling ſtill:

Some, with unſteady feet, juſt fallen to ground;
Others at top, whoſe heads are turning round.
To this high ſphere it happens ſtill that ſome,
The moſt unfit, are forwardeſt to come;
Yet among theſe are princes forc'd to chooſe,
Or ſeek out ſuch as would perhaps refuſe.
Favour too great is ſafely plac'd on none,
And ſoon becomes a dragon or a drone;
Either remiſs and negligent of all,
Or elſe imperious and tyrannical.

The muſe inſpires me now to look again,
And ſee a meaner ſort of ſordid men
Doating on little heaps of yellow duſt;
For that deſpiſing honour, eaſe, and luſt.
Let other bards, expreſſing how it ſhines,
Deſcribe with envy what the miſer finds;
Only as heaps of dirt it ſeems to me,
Where we ſuch deſpicable vermin ſee,
Who creep through filth a thouſand crooked ways,
Inſenſible of infamy or praiſe:
Loaded with guilt, they ſtill purſue their courſe,
Not ev'n reſtrain'd by love or friendſhip's force.

Not to enlarge on ſuch an obvious thought,
Behold their folly, which tranſcends their fault!
Alas! their cares and cautions only tend
To gain the means, and then to loſe the end.
Like heroes in romances, ſtill in fight
For miſtreſſes that yield them no delight.
This of all vice does moſt debaſe the mind;
Gold is itſelf th' alloy to human-kind.
Oh, happy times! when no ſuch thing as coin
E'er tempted friends to part, or foes to join!
Cattle or corn, among thoſe harmleſs men,
Was all their wealth, the gold and ſilver then:
Corn was too bulky to corrupt a tribe,
And bellowing herds would have betray'd the bribe.

Ev'n traffic now is intercourſe of ill,
And every wind brings a new miſchief ſtill;
By trade we flouriſh in our leaves and fruit,
But avarice and exceſs devour the root.

Thus far the muſe unwillingly has been
Fix'd on the dull, leſs happy ſorts of ſin;
But now, more pleas'd, ſhe views the different ways
Of luxury, and all its charms ſurveys.
Dear luxury! thou ſoft, but ſure deceit!
Riſe of the mean, and ruin of the great!
Thou ſure preſage of ill-approaching fates,
The bane of empires, and the change of ſtates!
Armies in vain reſiſt thy mighty power;
Not the worſt conduct would confound them more.
Thus Rome herſelf, while o'er the world ſhe flew,
And did by virtue all that world ſubdue,
Was by her own victorious arms oppreſs'd,
And catch'd infection from the conquer'd eaſt;
Whence all thoſe vices came, which ſoon devour
The beſt foundations of renown and power.
But oh! what need have we abroad to roam,
Who feel too much the ſad effects at home
Of wild exceſs? which we ſo plainly find
Decays the body, and impairs the mind.
But yet grave fops muſt not preſume from hence
To ſlight the ſacred pleaſures of the ſenſe:
Our appetites are Nature's laws, and given
Under the broad authentic ſeal of heaven.
Let pedants wrangle, and let bigots fight,
To put reſtraint on innocent delight,
But Heaven and Nature's always in the right;
They would not draw poor wretched mortals in,
Or give deſires that ſhould be doom'd for ſin.
Yet, that in height of harmleſs joy we may
Laſt to old age, and never loſe a day,
Amidſt our pleaſures we ourſelves ſhould ſpare,
And manage all with temperance and care.
The gods forbid, but we ſometimes may ſteep
Our joys in wine, and lull our cares aſleep:
It raiſes nature, ripens ſeeds of worth,
As moiſtening pictures call the colours forth;
But if the varniſh we too oft apply,
Alas! like colours, we grow faint and die.

Hold, hold, impetuous muſe: I would reſtrain
Her over-eager heat, but all in vain;
Abandon'd to delights, ſhe longs to rove;
I check'd her here, and now ſhe flies to love;
Shows me ſome rural nymph, by ſhepherd chas'd,
Soon overtaken, and as ſoon embrac'd:
The graſs by her, as ſhe by him, is preſs'd.
For ſhame, my muſe, let fancy gueſs the reſt:
At ſuch a point fancy can never ſtay,
But flies beyond whatever you can ſay.
Behold the ſilent ſhades, the amorous grove,
The dear delights, the very act of love.
This is his loweſt ſphere, his country ſcene,
Where love is humble, and his fare but mean;
Yet ſpringing up without the help of art,
Leaves a ſincerer reliſh in the heart,
More healthfully, though not ſo finely fed,
And better thrives than where more nicely bred.
But 'tis in courts where moſt he makes a ſhow,
And, high enthron'd, governs the world below;
For though in hiſtories learn'd ignorance
Attributes all to cunning or to chance,
Love will in thoſe diſguiſes often ſmile,
And knows the cauſe was kindneſs all the while.
What ſtory, place, or perſon, cannot prove
The boundleſs influence of mighty love?
Where'er the ſun can vigorous heat inſpire,
Both ſexes glow, and languiſh with deſire.
The weary'd ſwain, faſt in the arms of ſleep,
Love can awake, and often ſighing keep;
And buſy gown-men, by fond love diſguis'd,
Will leiſure find to make themſelves deſpis'd.
The proudeſt kings ſubmit to beauty's ſway:
Beauty itſelf, a greater prince than they,
Lies ſometimes languiſhing, with all its pride,
By a belov'd, though fickle lover's ſide.
I mean to ſlight the ſoft enchanting charm,
But, oh! my head and heart are both too warm.
I doat on woman-kind with all their faults;
Love turns my ſatire into ſofteſt thoughts;

Of all that paſſion which our peace deſtroys,
Inſtead of miſchiefs, I deſcribe the joys.
But ſhort will be his reign (I fear too ſhort)
And preſent cares ſhall be my future ſport.
Then love's bright torch put out, his arrows broke,
Looſe from kind chains, and from the engaging yoke,
To all fond thoughts I'll ſing ſuch counter charms,
The fair ſhall liſten in their lovers arms.
Now the enthuſiaſtic fit is ſpent,
I feel my weakneſs, and too late repent.
As they who walk in dreams oft climb too high
For ſenſe to follow with the waking eye;
And in ſuch wild attempts are blindly bold,
Which afterwards they tremble to behold:
So I review theſe ſallies of my pen,
And modeſt reaſon is return'd again;
My confidence I curſe, my fate accuſe,
Scarce hold from cenſuring the ſacred muſe.
No wretched poet of the railing pit,
No critic, curs'd with the wrong ſide of wit,
Is more ſevere from ignorance and ſpite,
Than I with judgment againſt all I write.

ODES AND ELEGIES.

ODE ON LOVE.

I.

LET others ſongs or ſatires write,
Provok'd by vanity or ſpite;
My muſe a nobler cauſe ſhall move,
To ſound aloud the praiſe of love:
The gentle, yet reſiſtleſs heat,
Which raiſes men to all things good and great:
While other paſſions of the mind
To low brutality debaſe mankind,
By love we are above ourſelves refin'd.
Oh love, thou trance divine! in which the ſoul,
Unclogg'd with worldly cares, may range without controul;
And ſoaring to her heaven, from thence inſpir'd can teach
High myſteries, above poor reaſon's feeble reach.

II.

To weak old age, prudence ſome aid may prove,
And curb thoſe appetites that faintly move;
But wild impetuous youth is tam'd by nothing leſs than love.
Of men too rough for peace, too rude for arts,
Love's power can penetrate the hardeſt hearts;
And through the cloſeſt pores a paſſage find,
Like that of light, to ſhine o'er all the mind.
The want of love does both extremes produce;
Maids are too nice, and men as much too looſe;
While equal good an amorous couple find,
She makes him conſtant, and he makes her kind.
New charms in vain a lover's faith would prove;
Hermits or bed-rid men they'll ſooner move:
The fair inveigler will but ſadly find
There's no ſuch eunuch as a man in love.
But when by his chaſte nymph embrac'd,
(For love makes all embraces chaſte)

Then the tranſported creature can
Do wonders, and is more than man.
Both heaven and earth would our deſires confine;
But yet in vain both heaven and earth combine,
Unleſs where love bleſſes the great deſign.
Hymen makes faſt the hand, but love the heart;
He the fool's god; thou nature's, Hymen, art;
Whoſe laws once broke, we are not held by force,
But the falſe breach itſelf is a divorce.

III.

For love the miſer will his gold deſpiſe;
The falſe grow faithful, and the fooliſh wiſe;
Cautious the young, and complaiſant the old,
The cruel gentle, and the coward bold.
Thou glorious ſun within our ſouls,
Whoſe influence ſo much controuls;
Ev'n dull and heavy lumps of love,
Quicken'd by thee, more lively move;
And if their heads but any ſubſtance hold,
Love ripens all that droſs into the pureſt gold.
In heaven's great work thy part is ſuch,
That maſter-like thou giv'ſt the laſt great touch
To heaven's own maſter-piece of man;
And finiſheſt what nature but began:
Thy happy ſtroke can into ſoftneſs bring
Reaſon, that rough and wrangling thing.
From childhood upwards we decay,
And grow but greater children every day:
So, reaſon, how can we be ſaid to riſe?
So many cares attend the being wiſe,
'Tis rather falling down a precipice.
From ſenſe to reaſon unimprov'd we move;
We only then advance, when reaſon turns to love.

IV.

Thou reigneſt o'er our earthly gods:
Uncrown'd by thee, their other crowns are loads;
Our beauty's ſmile their meaneſt courtier brings
Rather to pity than to envy kings;
His fellow-ſlaves he takes them now to be,
Favour'd by love perhaps much leſs than he.

For love, the timorous, baſhful maid
Of nothing but denying is afraid:
For love ſhe overcomes her ſhame,
Forſakes her fortune, and forgets her fame;
Yet, if but with a conſtant lover bleſt,
Thanks heaven for that, and never minds the reſt.

V.

Love is the ſalt of life; a higher taſte
It gives to pleaſure, and then makes it laſt.
Thoſe ſlighted favours which cold nymphs diſpenſe,
Mere common counters of the ſenſe,
Defective both in metal and in meaſure,
A lover's fancy coins into a treaſure.
How vaſt the ſubject! what a boundleſs ſtore
Of bright ideas ſhining all before!
The muſe's ſighs forbid me to give o'er!
But the kind god incites us various ways,
And now I find him all my ardour raiſe,
His precepts to perform as well as praiſe.

ODE ON BRUTUS.

I.

'TIS ſaid, that favourite, mankind,
Was made the lord of all below;
But yet the doubtful are concern'd to find,
'Tis only one man tells another ſo.
And, for this great dominion here,
Which over other beaſts we claim,
Reaſon our beſt credential does appear,
By which indeed we domineer,
But how abſurdly, we may ſee with ſhame.
Reaſon, that ſolemn trifle! light as air,
Driven up and down by cenſure or applauſe;
By partial love away 'tis blown,
Or the leaſt prejudice can weigh it down:
Thus our high privilege becomes our ſnare.
In any nice and weighty cauſe,
How weak, at beſt, is reaſon! yet the grave
Impoſe on that ſmall judgment which we have.

II.

In all thoſe wits, whoſe names have ſpread ſo wide,
And ev'n the force of time defy'd,
Some failings yet may be deſcry'd.
Among the reſt, with wonder be it told,
That Brutus is admir'd for Cæſar's death;
By which he yet ſurvives in fame's immortal breath.
Brutus, ev'n he, of all the reſt,
In whom we ſhould that deed the moſt deteſt,
Is of mankind eſteem'd the beſt.
As ſnow, deſcending from ſome lofty hill,
Is by its rolling courſe augmenting ſtill,
So from illuſtrious authors down have roll'd
Thoſe great encomiums he receiv'd of old:
Republic orators will ſhow eſteem,
And gild their eloquence with praiſe of him:
But truth, unveil'd, like a bright ſun appears,
To ſhine away this heap of ſeventeen hundred years

III.

In vain 'tis urg'd by an illuſtrious wit,
(To whom in all beſides I willingly ſubmit)
That Cæſar's life no pity could deſerve
From one who kill'd himſelf, rather than ſerve.
Had Brutus choſe rather himſelf to ſlay,
Than any maſter to obey,
Happy for Rome had been that noble pride;
The world had then remain'd in peace, and only Brutus dy'd.
For he, whoſe ſoul diſdains to own
Subjection to a tyrant's frown,
And his own life would rather end, (his friend.
Would ſure much rather kill himſelf than only hurt
To his own ſword in the Philippian field
Brutus indeed at laſt did yield:
But in thoſe times ſelf-killing was not rare,
And his proceeded only from deſpair:
He might have choſen elſe to live,
In hopes another Cæſar would forgive;
Then, for the good of Rome, he could once more
Conſpire againſt a life which had ſpar'd his before.

IV.

Our country challenges our utmoſt care,
And in our thoughts deſerves the tendereſt ſhare;
Her to a thouſand friends we ſhould preſer,
Yet not betray them, though it be for her.
Hard is his heart, whom no deſert can move,
A miſtreſs or a friend to love,
Above whate'er he does beſides enjoy;
But may he, for their ſakes, his ſire or ſons deſtroy!
For ſacred juſtice, or for public good,
Scorn'd be our wealth, our honour, and our blood:
In ſuch a cauſe, want is a happy ſtate,
Ev'n low diſgrace would be a glorious fate:
And death itſelf, when noble fame ſurvives,
More to be valued than a thouſand lives.
But 'tis not ſurely of ſo fair renown
To ſpill another's blood, as to expoſe our own:
Of all that's ours we cannot give too much,
But what belongs to friendſhip, oh! 'tis ſacrilege to touch.

V.

Can we ſtand by unmov'd, and ſee
Our mother robb'd and raviſh'd? Can we be
Excus'd, if in her cauſe we never ſtir,
Pleas'd with the ſtrength and beauty of the raviſher?
Thus ſings our bard with heat almoſt divine;
'Tis pity that his thought was not as ſtrong as fine.
Would it more juſtly did the caſe expreſs,
Or that its beauty and its grace were leſs.
(Thus a nymph ſometimes we ſee,
Who ſo charming ſeems to be,
That, jealous of a ſoft ſurpriſe,
We ſcarce durſt truſt our eager eyes)
Such a fallacious ambuſh to eſcape,
It were but vain to plead a willing rape;
A valiant ſon would be provok'd the more;
A force we therefore muſt confeſs, but acted long before;
A marriage ſince did intervene,
With all the ſolemn and the ſacred ſcene;

Loud was the Hymenean ſong;
The violated dame * walk'd ſeemingly along,
And in the midſt of the moſt ſacred dance,
As if enamour'd of his ſight,
Often ſhe caſt a kind admiring glance
On the bold ſtruggler for delight;
Who afterwards appear'd ſo moderate and cool,
As if for public good alone he ſo deſir'd to rule.

VI.

But oh! that this were all which we can urge
Againſt a Roman of ſo great a ſoul!
And that fair truth permitted us to purge
His fact of what appears ſo foul!
Friendſhip, that ſacred and ſublimeſt thing!
The nobleſt quality, and the chiefeſt good,
(In this dull age ſcarce underſtood)
Inſpires us with unuſual warmth her njur'd rites to ſing.
Aſſiſt, ye angels! whoſe immortal bliſs,
Though more refin'd, chiefly conſiſts in this.
How plainly your bright thoughts to one another ſhine!
Oh! how ye all agree in harmony divine!
The race of mutual love with equal zeal ye run,
A courſe, as far from any end, as when at firſt begun.
Ye ſaw, and ſmil'd upon this matchleſs pair,
Who ſtill betwixt them did ſo many virtues ſhare,
Some which belong to peace, and ſome to ſtrife,
Thoſe of a calm, and of an active life,
That all the excellence of human kind
Concurr'd to make of both but one united mind,
Which friendſhip did ſo faſt and cloſely bind,
Not the leaſt cement could appear by which their ſouls were join'd.
That tie which holds our mortal frame,
Which poor unknowing we a ſoul and body name,
Seems not a compoſition more divine,
Or more abſtruſe, than all that does in friendſhip ſhine.

* Rome.

VII.

From mighty Cæſar and his boundleſs grace,
Though Brutus once at leaſt his life receiv'd;
Such obligations, though ſo high believ'd,
Are yet but ſlight in ſuch a caſe,
Where friendſhip ſo poſſeſſes all the place.
There is no room for gratitude, ſince he,
Who ſo obliges, is more pleas'd than his ſav'd friend can be.
Juſt in the midſt of all this noble heat,
While their great hearts did both ſo kindly beat,
That it amaz'd the lookers on,
And forc'd them to ſuſpect a father and a ſon*;
(Though here ev'n Nature's ſelf ſtill ſeem to be outdone)
From ſuch a friendſhip unprovok'd to fall!
Is horrid, yet I wiſh that fact were all
Which does with too much cauſe ungrateful Brutus call.

VIII.

In cooleſt blood he laid a long deſign
Againſt his beſt and deareſt friend;
Did even his foes in zeal exceed
To ſpirit others up to work ſo black a deed;
Himſelf the centre where they all did join.
Cæſar, meantime, fearleſs, and fond of him,
Was as induſtrious all the while
To give ſuch ample marks of fond eſteem,
As made the graveſt Roman ſmile
To ſee with how much eaſe love can the wiſe beguile.
He, whom thus Brutus doom'd to bleed,
Did, ſetting his own race aſide,
Nothing leſs for him provide,
Than in the world's great empire to ſucceed:
Which we are bound in juſtice to allow,
Is all-ſufficient proof to ſhow
That Brutus did not ſtrike for his own ſake:
And if, alas! he fail'd, 'twas only by miſtake.

* Cæſar was ſuſpected to have begotten Brutus.

ODE

ON THE DEATH OF HENRY PURCELL.

GOOD angels ſnatch'd him eagerly on high ;
Joyful they flew, ſinging and ſoaring thro' the ſky,
Teaching his new-fledg'd ſoul to fly ;
While we, alas! lamenting lie.
He went muſing all along,
Compoſing new their heavenly ſong.
A while his ſkilful notes loud hallelujahs drown'd ;
But ſoon they ceas'd their own to catch his pleaſing ſound.
David himſelf improv'd the harmony,
David, in ſacred ſtory ſo renown'd
No leſs for muſic, than for poetry !
Genius ſublime in either art !
Crown'd with applauſe ſurpaſſing all deſert !
A man juſt after God's own heart !
If human cares are lawful to the bleſt,
Already ſettled in eternal reſt ;
Needs muſt he wiſh that Purcell only might
Have liv'd to ſet what he vouchſaf'd to write ;
For, ſure, the noble thirſt of fame
With the frail body never dies ;
But with the ſoul aſcends the ſkies,
From whence at firſt it came.
'Tis ſure no little proof we have
That part of us ſurvives the grave,
And in our fame below ſtill bears a ſhare :
Why is the future elſe ſo much our care,
Ev'n in our lateſt moment of deſpair ?
And death deſpis'd for fame by all the wiſe and brave ?
Oh, all ye bleſt harmonious choir ;
Who power almighty only love, and only that admire!
Look down with pity from your peaceful bower,
On this ſad iſle perplex'd,
And ever, ever vex'd
With anxious care of trifles, wealth and power.
In our rough minds due reverence infuſe
For ſweet melodious ſounds, and each harmonious muſe.
Muſic exalts mans' nature, and inſpires
High elevated thoughts, or gentle, kind deſires.

ELEGY TO THE DUCHESS OF R——

THOU lovely ſlave to a rude huſband's will,
By nature us'd ſo well, by him ſo ill!
For all that grief we ſee your mind endure,
Your glaſs preſents you with a pleaſing cure.
Thoſe maids you envy for their happier ſtate,
To have your form, would gladly have your fate;
And of like ſlavery each wife complains,
Without ſuch beauty's help to bear her chains.
Huſbands like him we every where may ſee;
But where can we behold a wife like thee?
While to a tyrant you by fate are ty'd,
By love you tyrannize o'er all beſide:
Thoſe eyes though weeping, can no pity move:
Worthy our grief! more worthy of our love!
You, while ſo fair (do Fortune what ſhe pleaſe)
Can be no more in pain than we at eaſe;
Unleſs, unſatisfied with all our vows,
Your vain ambition ſo unbounded grows,
That you repine a huſband ſhould eſcape
Th' united force of ſuch a face and ſhape.
If ſo, alas! for all thoſe charming powers,
Your caſe is juſt as deſperate as ours.
Expect that birds ſhould only ſing to you,
And, as you walk, that ev'ry tree ſhould bow;
Expect thoſe ſtatues, as you paſs, ſhould burn;
And that with wonder men ſhould ſtatues turn;
Such beauty is enough to give things life,
But not to make a huſband love his wife:
A huſband, worſe than ſtatues, or than trees;
Colder that thoſe, leſs ſenſible than theſe.
Then from ſo dull a care your thoughts remove,
And waſte not ſighs you only owe to love.
'Tis pity, ſighs from ſuch a breaſt ſhould part,
Unleſs to eaſe ſome doubtful lover's heart;
Who dies becauſe he muſt too juſtly prize
What yet the dull poſſeſſor does deſpiſe.
Thus precious jewels among Indians grow,
Who nor their uſe, nor wondrous value know;
But we for thoſe bright treaſures tempt the main,
And hazard life for what the fools diſdain.

SONGS AND CHORUSES.

INCONSTANCY EXCUSED.

I MUST confeſs, I am utrue
To Gloriana's eyes;
But he that's ſmil'd upon by you,
Muſt all the world deſpiſe.

In winter, fires of little worth
Excite our dull deſire:
But when the ſun breaks kindly forth,
Thoſe fainter flames expire.

Then blame me not for ſlighting now
What I did once adore;
O, do but this one change allow,
And I can change no more:

Fixt by your never-failing charms,
Till I with age decay,
Till languiſhing within your arms,
I ſigh my ſoul away.

THE COMPLAINT.

OH, conceal that charming creature
From my wondering, wiſhing eyes!
Every motion, every feature
Does ſome raviſh'd heart ſurpriſe;
But oh, I ſighing, ſighing, ſee
The happy ſwain; ſhe ne'er can be
Falſe to him, or kind to me.

Yet, if I could humbly ſhow her,
Ah! how wretched I remain:
'Tis not, ſure, a thing below her,
Still to pity ſo much pain.
The gods ſome pleaſure, pleaſure take,
Happy as themſelves to make
Thoſe who ſuffer for their ſake.

Since your hand alone was given
To a wretch not worth your care;
Like ſome angel ſent from heaven,
Come and raiſe me from deſpair.
Your heart I cannot, cannot miſs,
And I deſire no other bliſs:
Let all the world beſides be his.

CHORUSES IN JULIUS CÆSAR.

I.

WHITHER is Roman honour gone?
Where is your ancient virtue now?
That valor, which ſo bright has ſhone,
And with the wings of conqueſt flown,
Muſt to a haughty maſter bow:
Who, with our toil, our blood, and all we have beſide,
Gorges his ill-got power, his humour, and his pride.

II.

Fearleſs he will his life expoſe;
So does a lion or a bear.
His very virtues threaten thoſe,
Who more his bold ambition fear.
How ſtupid wretches we appear,
Who round the world for wealth and empire roam,
Yet never, never think what ſlaves we are at home!

III.

Did men for this together join,
Quitting the free wild life of Nature?
What other beaſt did e'er deſign
The ſetting up his fellow-creature,
And of two miſchiefs chooſe the greater?
Oh! rather than be ſlaves to bold imperious men,
Give us our wildneſs, and our woods, our huts and caves again.

IV.

There, ſecure from lawleſs ſway,
Out of pride or envy's way;
Living up to nature's rules,
Not deprav'd by knaves and fools;
Happily we all ſhould live, and harmleſs as our ſheep,
And at laſt as calmly die as infants fall aſleep.

CHORUS II.

LO! to prevent this mighty empire's doom,
From bright unknown abodes of bliſs I come,
The awful genius of majeſtic Rome.

Great is her danger: but I will engage
Some few, the maſter-ſouls of all this age,
To do an act of juſt heroic rage.

'Tis hard a man ſo great ſhould fall ſo low:
More hard to let ſo brave a people bow
To one themſelves have rais'd, who ſcorns them now.

Yet oh! I grieve that Brutus ſhould be ſtain'd,
Whoſe life, excepting this one act, remain'd
So pure, that future times will think it feign'd.

But only he can make the reſt combine;
The very life and ſoul of their deſign;
The centre, where thoſe mighty ſpirits join.

Unthinking men no ſort of ſcruple make;
Others do ill, only for miſchief's ſake:
But even the beſt are guilty by miſtake.

Thus ſome for envy, or revenge, intend
To bring the bold uſurper to his end;
But for his country Brutus ſtabs his friend.

CHORUS III.

BY TWO AERIAL SPIRITS.

I.

TELL me, oh! tell me, whence ariſe
Theſe diſorders in our ſkies?
Rome's great genius wildly gaz'd,
And the gods ſeem all amaz'd.

II.

Know, in ſight of this day's ſun
Such a deed is to be done,
Black enough to ſhroud the light
Of all this world in diſmal night.

I.

What is this deed?

II.

To kill a man,
The greateſt ſince mankind began:
Learned, eloquent and wiſe,
Generous, merciful, and brave!

I.

Yet not too great a ſacrifice
The liberty of Rome to ſave.

II.

But will not goodneſs claim regard,
And does not worth deſerve reward?

I.

Does not their country lie at ſtake?
Can they do too much for her ſake?

Both Spirits together.

Though dreadful be this doom of fate,
Juſt is that power which governs all;
Better this wondrous man ſhould fall
Than a moſt glorious, virtuous ſtate.

CHORUS IV.

HOW great a curſe has Providence
Thought fit to caſt on humankind!
Learning, courage, eloquence,
The gentleſt nature, nobleſt mind,
Were intermixt in one alone;
Yet in one moment overthrown.

Could chance, or ſenſeleſs atoms join
To form a ſoul ſo great as his?
Or would thoſe powers we hold divine
Deſtroy their own chief maſter-piece?
Where ſo much difficulty lies,
The doubtful are the only wiſe.

And what muſt more perplex our thoughts,
Great Jove the beſt of Romans ſends
To do the very worſt of faults,
And kill the kindeſt of his friends.
All this is far above our reach,
Whatever prieſts preſume to preach.

CHORUSES IN MARCUS BRUTUS.

* CHORUS III.

I.

DARK is the maze poor mortals tread;
Wiſdom itſelf a guide will need:
We little thought, when Cæſar bled,
That a worſe Cæſar would ſucceed.
And are we under ſuch a curſe,
We cannot change but for the worſe?

II.

With fair pretence of foreign force,
By which Rome muſt herſelf enthral;
Theſe, without bluſhes or remorſe,
Proſcribe the beſt, impoveriſh all.
The Gauls themſelves, our greateſt foes,
Could act no miſchiefs worſe than thoſe.

III.

That Julius, with ambitious thoughts,
Had virtues too, his foes could find;
Theſe equal him in all his faults,
But never in his noble mind.
That free-born ſpirits ſhould obey
Wretches who know not how to ſway!

IV.

Late we repent our haſty choice,
In vain bemoan ſo quick a turn.
Hark all to Rome's united voice!
Better a while that we had borne
Ev'n all thoſe ills which muſt diſpleaſe,
Than ſought a cure far worſe than the diſeaſe.

* See the firſt and ſecond choruſes in the Poems of Mr. Pope.

CHORUS IV.

OUR vows thus cheerfully we ſing,
While martial muſic fires our blood;
Let all the neighbouring echoes ring
With clamours for our country's good:
And, for reward, of the juſt gods we claim
A life with freedom, or a death with fame.

May Rome be freed from war's alarms,
And taxes heavy to be borne;
May ſhe beware of foreign arms,
And ſend them back with noble ſcorn:
And, for reward, &c.

May ſhe no more confide in friends,
Who nothing farther underſtood,
Than only, for their private ends,
To waſte her wealth, and ſpill her blood:
And, for reward, &c.

Our ſenators, great Jove, reſtrain
From private piques, thy prudence call
From the low thoughts of little gain,
And hazarding the loſing all:
And, for reward, &c.

The ſhining arms with haſte prepare,
Then to the glorious combat fly;
Our minds unclogg'd with farther care,
Except to overcome or die:
And, for reward, &c.

They fight oppreſſion to increaſe,
We for our liberties and laws:
It were a ſin to doubt ſucceſs
When freedom is the noble cauſe:
And, for reward, of the juſt gods we claim
A life with freedom, or a death with fame.

MISCELLANIES.

ON MR. HOBBES, AND HIS WRITINGS.

SUCH is the mode of theſe cenſorious days,
The art is loſt of knowing how to praiſe;
Poets are envious now, and fools alone
Admire at wit, becauſe themſelves have none.
Yet whatſoever is by vain critics thought,
Praiſing is harder much than finding fault;
In homely pieces ev'n the Dutch excel,
Italians only can draw beauty well.

As ſtrings, alike wound up, ſo equal prove,
That one reſounding makes the other move;
From ſuch a cauſe our ſatires pleaſe ſo much,
We ſympathize with each ill-natur'd touch;
And as the ſharp infection ſpreads about,
The reader's malice helps the writer out.
To blame, is eaſy; to commend, is bold;
Yet, if the muſe inſpires it, who can hold?
To merit we are bound to give applauſe,
Content to ſuffer in ſo juſt a cauſe.

While in dárk ignorance we lay afraid
Of fancies, ghoſts, and every empty ſhade,
Great Hobbes appear'd, and by plain reaſon's light
Put ſuch fantaſtic forms to ſhameful flight.
Fond is their fear, who think men needs muſt be
To vice enſlav'd, if from vain terrors free;
The wiſe and good morality will guide,
And ſuperſtition all the world beſide.

In other authors though the thought be good,
'Tis not ſometimes ſo eaſily underſtood;
That jewel oft' unpoliſh'd has remain'd;
Some words ſhould be left out, and ſome explain'd;
So that, in ſearch of ſenſe, we either ſtray,
Or elſe grow weary in ſo rough a way.
But here ſweet eloquence does always ſmile,
In ſuch a choice, yet unaffected ſtyle,

As muſt both knowledge and delight impart,
The force of reaſon, with the flowers of art;
Clear as a beautiful tranſparent ſkin,
Which never hides the blood, yet holds it in:
Like a delicious ſtream it ever ran,
As ſmooth as woman, but as ſtrong as man.
Bacon himſelf, whoſe univerſal wit
Does admiration through the world beget,
Scarce more his age's ornament is thought,
Or greater credit to his country brought.
While fame is young, too weak to fly away,
Malice purſues her, like ſome bird of prey;
But once on wing, then all the quarrels ceaſe;
Envy herſelf is glad to be at peace,
Gives over, weary'd with ſo high a flight,
Above her reach, and ſcarce within her ſight.
Hobbes, to this happy pitch arriv'd at laſt,
Might have look'd down with pride on dangers paſt:
But ſuch the frailty is of humankind,
Men toil for fame which no man lives to find;
Long ripening under ground this China lies:
Fame bears no fruit till the vain planter dies.
Thus Nature, tir'd with his unuſual length
Of life, which put her to her utmoſt ſtrength,
Such ſtock of wit unable to ſupply,
To ſpare herſelf, was glad to let him die.

THE ELECTION OF A POET LAUREAT.

IN M,DCC,XIX.

A FAMOUS aſſembly was ſummon'd of late:
To crown a new laureat, came Phœbus in ſtate,
With all that Montfauçon himſelf could deſire,
His bow, laurel, harp, and abundance of fire.

At Bartlemew fair ne'er did bullies ſo juſtle,
No country election e'er made ſuch a buſtle:
From garret, mint, tavern, they all poſt away,
Some thirſting for ſack, ſome ambitious of bay.

All came with full confidence, flush'd with vain hope,
From Cibber and Durfey, to Prior and Pope.
Phœbus smil'd on these last, but yet ne'ertheless,
Said, he hop'd they had gotten enough by the press.

With a huge mountain-load of heroical lumber,
Which from Tonson to Curll every press had groan'd under,
Came Blackmore, and cry'd, Look, all these are my lays,
But at present I beg you'd but read my Essays.

Lampooners and critics rush'd in like a tide;
Stern Dennis, and Gildon, came first side-by-side.
Apollo confess'd that their lashes had stings,
But beadles and hangmen were never chose kings.

Steele long had so cunningly manag'd the town,
He could not be blam'd for expecting the crown;
Apollo demurr'd as to granting his wish,
But wish'd him good luck in his project of fish.

Lame Congreve, unable such things to endure,
Of Apollo begg'd either a crown or a cure.
To refuse such a writer Apollo was loth,
And almost inclin'd to have granted him both.

When Buckingham came, he scarce car'd to be seen,
Till Phœbus desir'd his old friend to walk in;
But a laureat peer had never been known,
The commoners claimed that place as their own.

Yet if the kind god had been ne'er so inclin'd
To break an old rule, yet he well knew his mind,
Who of such preferment would only make sport,
And laugh'd at all suitors for places at court.

Notwithstanding this law, yet Lansdowne was nam'd,
But Apollo with kindness his indolence blam'd,
And said he would choose him, but that he should fear
An employment of trouble he never could bear.

A prelate * for wit and for eloquence fam'd,
Apollo ſoon miſs'd, and he needs not be nam'd;
Since amidſt a whole bench, of which ſome are ſo bright,
No one of them ſhines ſo learn'd and polite.

To Shippen, Apollo was cold with reſpect,
Since he for the ſtate could the muſes neglect:
But ſaid, in a greater aſſembly he ſhin'd,
And places were things he had ever declin'd.

Trap, Young, and Vanbrugh, expected reward,
For ſomethings writ well: but Apollo declar'd,
That one was too flat, the other too rough,
And the third ſure already had places enough.

Pert Budgell came next, and demanding the bays,
Said, thoſe works muſt be good which had Addiſon's praiſe;
But Apollo reply'd, Child Euſtace, 'tis known,
Moſt authors will praiſe whatſoever's their own.

When Philips came forth, as ſtarch as a Quaker,
Whoſe ſimple profeſſion's a paſtoral-maker;
Apollo advis'd him from playhouſe to keep,
And pipe to nought elſe but his dog and his ſheep.

Hughes, Fenton, and Gay, came laſt in the train,
Too modeſt to aſk for the crown they would gain:
Phœbus thought them too baſhful, and ſaid they would need
More boldneſs, if ever they hop'd to ſucceed.

Apollo, now driven to a curſed quandary,
Was wiſhing for Swift, or the fam'd Lady Mary:
Nay, had honeſt Tom Southerne but been within call—
But at laſt he grew wanton, and laugh'd at them all:

And ſo ſpying one who came only to gaze,
A hater of verſe, and deſpiſer of plays;
To him in great form, without any delay,
(Though a zealous fanatic) preſented the bay.

* Dr. Atterbury, Biſhop of Rocheſter.

All the wits ſtood aſtoniſh'd at hearing the god
So gravely pronounce an election ſo odd;
And though Prior and Pope only laugh'd in his face,
Moſt others were ready to ſink in the place.

Yet ſome thought the vacancy open was kept,
Concluding the bigot would never accept:
But the hypocrite told them, he well underſtood,
Though the function was wicked, the ſtipend was good.

At laſt in ruſh'd Euſden, and cry'd, "Who ſhall have it,
"But I, the true laureat, to whom the king gave it?"
Apollo begg'd pardon, and granted his claim;
But vow'd, though, till then, he ne'er heard of his name.

ON THE DUKE OF YORK,

BANISHED TO BRUSSELS.

I FEEL a ſtrange impulſe, a ſtrong deſire,
(For what vain thoughts will not a muſe inſpire!)
To ſing on loſty ſubjects, and to raiſe
My own low fame, by writing James's praiſe.
Oft' have we heard the wonders of his youth,
Obſerv'd thoſe ſeeds of fortitude and truth,
Which ſince have ſpread ſo wide, ſo wondrous high,
The good diſtreſs'd beneath that ſhelter lie.
In arms more active than ev'n war requir'd,
And in the midſt of mighty chiefs admir'd,
Of all Heaven's gifts, no temper is ſo rare,
As ſo much courage mix'd with ſo much care.
When martial fire makes all the ſpirits boil,
And forces youth to military toil,
No wonder it ſhould fiercely then engage:
Women themſelves will venture in a rage:
But in the midſt of all that furious heat,
While ſo intent on actions brave and great,
For other lives to feel ſuch tender fears,
And, careleſs of his own, to care for theirs,

Is that compoſure which a hero makes,
And which illuſtrious York alone partakes
With that great man*, whoſe fame has flown ſo far,
Who taught him firſt the noble art of war.
Oh, wondrous pair! whom equal virtues crown,
Oh worthy of each other's vaſt renown;
None but Turenne with York could glory ſhare,
And none but York deſerve ſo great a maſter's care.
Scarce was he come to bleſs his native iſle,
And reap the ſoft reward of glorious toil,
But, like Alcides, ſtill new dangers call
His courage forth, and ſtill he vanquiſh'd all.
At ſea, that bloody ſcene of boundleſs rage,
Where floating caſtles in fierce flames engage,
(Where Mars himſelf does frowningly command,
And by lieutenants only fights at land;)
For his own fame howe'er he fought before,
For England's honour yet he ventur'd more.
In thoſe black times, when, faction raging high,
Valour and Innocence were forc'd to fly,
With York they fled; but not depreſt his mind;
Still, like a diamond in the duſt, it ſhin'd.
When from afar his drooping friends beheld
How in diſtreſs he ev'n himſelf excell'd;
How to his envious fate, his country's frown,
His brother's will, he ſacrific'd his own;
They rais'd their hearts, and never doubted more,
But that juſt Heaven would all our joys reſtore.
So when black clouds ſurround heaven's glorious face,
Tempeſtuous darkneſs covering all the place,
If we diſcern but the leaſt glimmering ray
Of that bright orb of fire which rules the day,
The cheerful ſight our fainting courage warms:
Fix'd upon that, we fear no future harms.

* The Mareſchal de Turenne.

ON APPREHENSION OF LOSING WHAT HE HAD NEWLY GAINED.

IN IMITATION OF OVID.

SURE I of all men am the firſt
That ever was by kindneſs curſt,
Who muſt my only bliſs bemoan,
And am by happineſs undone.
Had I at diſtance only ſeen
That lovely face, I might have been
With the delightful object pleas'd,
But not with all this paſſion ſeiz'd.
When afterwards ſo near I came
As to be ſcorch'd in beauty's flame;
To ſo much ſoftneſs, ſo much ſenſe,
Reaſon itſelf made no defence.
What pleaſing thoughts poſſeſs'd my mind,
When little favours ſhow'd you kind!
And though, when coldneſs oft' prevail'd,
My heart would ſink, and ſpirits fail'd,
Yet willingly the yoke I bore,
And all your chains as bracelets wore:
At your lov'd feet all day would lie,
Deſiring, without knowing why:
For, not yet bleſt within your arms,
Who could have thought of half your charms!
Charms of ſuch a wondrous kind,
Words we cannot, muſt not find;
A body worthy of your mind.
Fancy could ne'er ſo high reflect,
Nor love itſelf ſuch joys expect.
After ſuch embraces paſt,
Whoſe memory will ever laſt,
Love is ſtill reflecting back;
All my ſoul is on a rack:
To be in hell's ſufficient curſe,
But to fall from heaven is worſe.
I liv'd in grief ere this I knew,
But then I dwelt in darkneſs too.

Of gains, alas! I could not boaſt;
But little thought how much I loſt.
Now heart-devouring eagerneſs,
And ſharp impatience to poſſeſs;
Now reſtleſs cares, conſuming fires,
Anxious thoughts, and fierce deſires,
Tear my heart to that degree,
For ever fix'd on only thee:
Then all my comfort is, I ſhall
Live in thy arms, or not at all.

THE PICTURE,

IN IMITATION OF ANACREON.

THOU flatterer of all the fair,
Come with all your ſkill and care;
Draw me ſuch a ſhape and face
As your flattery would diſgrace.
Wiſh not that ſhe would appear,
'Tis well for you ſhe is not here;
Scarce can you with ſafety ſee
All her charms deſcrib'd by me:
I, alas! the danger know,
I, alas! have felt the blow;
Mourn, as loſt, my former days,
That never ſung of Celia's praiſe;
And thoſe few that are behind
I ſhall bleſt or wretched find,
Only juſt as ſhe is kind.
With her tempting eyes begin,
Eyes that would draw angels in
To a ſecond ſweeter ſin.
Oh, thoſe wanton rolling eyes!
At each glance a lover dies:
Make them bright, yet make them willing,
Let them look both kind and killing.
Next, draw her forehead; then her noſe,
And lips juſt opening, that diſcloſe
Teeth ſo bright, and breath ſo ſweet,
So much beauty, ſo much wit,
To our very ſoul they ſtrike,
All our ſenſes pleas'd alike.

But ſo pure a white and red,
Never, never, can be ſaid:
What are words in ſuch a caſe?
What is paint to ſuch a face?
How ſhould either art avail us?
Fancy here itſelf muſt fail us.
In her looks, and in her mien,
Such a graceful air is ſeen,
That if you, with all your art,
Can but reach the ſmalleſt part,
Next to her, the matchleſs ſhe,
We ſhall wonder moſt at thee.
Then her neck, and breaſts, and hair,
And her——but my charming fair
Does in a thouſand things excel,
Which I muſt not, dare not tell.
How go on then? Oh! I ſee
A lovely Venus drawn by thee;
Oh how fair ſhe does appear!
Touch it only here and there.
Make her yet ſeem more divine,
Your Venus then may look like mine,
Whoſe bright form, if once you ſaw,
You by her would Venus draw.

ON THE LOSS OF AN ONLY SON,
ROBERT MARQUIS OF NORMANDY.

OUR morning's gay and ſhining;
The day our joys declare;
At evening no repining;
And night's all void of care.

A fond tranſported mother
Was often heard to cry,
Oh, where is ſuch another,
So bleſs'd by Heaven as I?

A child at firſt was wanting;
Now ſuch a ſon was ſent,
As parents moſt lamenting
In him would find content.

A child of whom kind Heaven
Not only hope beſtows,
But has already given
Him all our hopes propoſe.

The happy ſire's poſſeſſing
His ſhare in ſuch a boy,
Adds ſtill a greater bleſſing
To all my other joy.

But ah! this ſhiny weather
Became too hot at laſt;
Black clouds began to gather,
And all the ſky o'ercaſt:

So fierce a fever rages,
We all lie drown'd in tears;
And diſmal ſad preſages
Come thundering in our ears.

The doubts that made us languiſh
Did worſe, far worſe than kill.
Yet, oh, with all their anguiſh,
Would we had doubted ſtill.

But why ſo much digreſſion,
This fatal loſs to ſhow?
Alas, there's no expreſſion
Can tell a parent's woe!

ON MR. POPE, AND HIS POEMS.

WITH age decay'd, with courts and buſineſs tir'd,
Caring for nothing but what eaſe requir'd,
Too ſerious now a wanton muſe to court,
And from the critics ſafe arriv'd in port;
I little thought of launching forth again,
Amidſt adventurous rovers of the pen;
And, after ſome ſmall undeſerv'd ſucceſs,
Thus hazarding at laſt to make it leſs.
Encomiums ſuit not this cenſorious time,
Itſelf a ſubject for ſatiric rhyme;

Ignorance honor'd, wit and worth defam'd,
Folly triumphant, and ev'n Homer blam'd.
But to this genius, join'd with ſo much art,
Such various learning mix'd in every part,
Poets are bound a loud applauſe to pay;
Apollo bids it, and they muſt obey.
And yet ſo wondrous, ſo ſublime a thing,
As the great Iliad, ſcarce could make me ſing;
Except I juſtly could at once commend
A good companion, and as firm a friend.
One moral, or a mere well-natur'd deed,
Can all deſert in ſciences exceed.
'Tis great delight to laugh at ſome men's ways;
But a much greater to give merit praiſe.

ON THE TIMES.

SINCE in vain our parſons teach,
Hear for once a poet preach:
Vice has loſt its very name,
Skill and cozenage thought the ſame;
Only playing well the game.
Foul contrivances we ſee
Call'd but ingenuity:
Ample fortunes often made
Out of frauds in every trade,
Which an aukward child afford
Enough to wed the greateſt lord.
The miſer ſtarves to raiſe a ſon;
But, if once the fool is gone,
Years of thrift ſcarce ſerve a day,
Rake-hell ſquanders all away.
Huſbands ſeeking for a place,
Or toiling for their pay;
While their wives undo their race
By petticoats and play:
Breeding boys to drink and dice,
Carrying girls to comedies,
Where mama's intrigues are ſhown,
Which ere long will be their own.

Having firſt at ſermon ſlept,
Tedious day is weekly kept
By worſe hypocrites than men,
Till Monday comes to cheat again.
Ev'n among the nobleſt born,
Moral virtue is a ſcorn;
Gratitude, but rare at beſt,
And fidelity a jeſt.
All our wit but party-mocks,
All our wiſdom raiſing ſtocks:
Counted folly to defend
Sinking ſide, or falling friend.
Long an officer may ſerve;
Prais'd and wounded, he may ſtarve:
No receipt to make him riſe,
Like inventing loyal lies.
We, whoſe anceſtors have ſhin'd
In arts of peace, and fields of fame,
To ill and idleneſs inclin'd,
Now are grown a public ſhame.
Fatal that inteſtine jar,
Which produc'd our civil war!
Ever ſince, how ſad a race!
Senſeleſs, violent, and baſe!

ON THE DEITY.

WRETCHED mankind! void of both ſtrength and ſkill!
Dextrous at nothing but at doing ill!
In merit humble, in pretenſions high;
Among them none, alas! more weak than I,
And none more blind: tho' ſtill I worthleſs thought
The beſt I ever ſpoke, or ever wrote.

But zealous heat exalts the humbleſt mind;
Within my ſoul ſuch ſtrong impulſe I find
The heavenly tribute of due praiſe to pay:
Perhaps 'tis ſacred, and I muſt obey.

Yet ſuch the ſubjects various, and ſo high,
Stupendous wonders of the Deity!

Miraculous effects of boundleſs power!
And that as boundleſs goodneſs ſhining more!
All theſe ſo numberleſs my thoughts attend,
Oh where ſhall I begin, or ever end?

But on that theme which ev'n the wiſe abuſe,
So ſacred, ſo ſublime, and ſo abſtruſe,
Abruptly to break off, wants no excuſe.

While others vainly ſtrive to know thee more,
Let me in ſilent reverence adore;
Wiſhing that human power were higher rais'd,
Only that thine might be more nobly prais'd!
Thrice happy angels in their high degree,
Created worthy of extolling thee!

WRITTEN OVER A GATE.

HERE lives a man, who, by relation
Depends upon predeſtination;
For which the learned and the wiſe
His underſtanding much deſpiſe.
But I pronounce, with loyal tongue,
Him in the right, them in the wrong;
For how could ſuch a wretch ſucceed,
But that, alas! it was decreed?

TO A LADY

RETIRING INTO A MONASTERY.

WHAT breaſt but your's can hold the double fire
Of fierce devotion, and of fond deſire?
Love would ſhine forth, were not your zeal ſo bright,
Whoſe glaring flames eclipſe his gentler light?
Leſs ſeems the faith that mountains can remove,
Than this which triumphs over youth and love.
But ſhall ſome threatening prieſt divide us two?
What worſe than that could all his curſes do?
Thus with a fright ſome have reſign'd their breath,
And poorly dy'd, only for fear of death.
Heaven ſees our paſſions with indulgence ſtill,
And they who once lov'd well, cannot do ill.

While to us nothing but ourſelves is dear,
Should the world frown, yet what have we to fear?
Fame, wealth, and power, thoſe high-priz'd gifts of fate,
The low concerns of a leſs happy ſtate,
Are far beneath us: Fortune's ſelf may take
Her aim at us, yet no impreſſion make.
Let worldlings aſk her help, or fear her harms;
We can lie ſafe, lock'd in each other's arms;
Like the bleſt ſaints, eternal raptures know,
And ſlight thoſe ſtorms that vainly reſt below.
Yet this, all this you are reſolv'd to quit;
I ſee my ruin, and I muſt ſubmit:
But think, O think, before you prove unkind,
How loſt a wretch you leave forlorn behind.
Malignant envy, mix'd with hate and fear,
Revenge for wrongs too burdenſome to bear;
Ev'n zeal itſelf, from whence all miſchiefs ſpring,
Have never done ſo barbarous a thing.
With ſuch a fate the heavens decreed to vex
Armida once, though of the fairer ſex.
Rinaldo ſhe had charm'd with ſo much art,
Hers was his power, his perſon and his heart:
Honour's high thoughts no more his mind could move;
She ſooth'd his rage, and turn'd it all to love:
When ſtraight a guſt of fierce devotion blows,
And in a moment all her joys o'erthrows:
The poor Armida tears her golden hair,
Matchleſs till now, for love or for deſpair.
Who is not mov'd while the ſad nymph complains?
Yet you now act what Taſſo only feigns:
And after all our vows, our ſighs, our tears,
My baniſh'd ſorrows, and your conquer'd fears,
So many doubts, ſo many dangers paſt,
Viſions of zeal muſt vanquiſh me at laſt.
Thus, in great Homer's war, throughout the field
Some hero ſtill made all things mortal yield;
But when a god once took the vanquiſh'd ſide,
The weak prevail'd, and the victorious dy'd.

A LETTER FROM SEA.

FAIREST, if time and abſence can incline
Your heart to wandering thoughts no more than mine;
Then ſhall my hand, as changeleſs as my mind,
From your glad eyes a kindly welcome find;
Then, while this note my conſtancy aſſures,
You'll be almoſt as pleas'd as I with yours.
And truſt me, when I feel that kind relief,
Abſence itſelf awhile ſuſpends its grief:
So may it do with you, but ſtrait return;
For it were cruel not ſometimes to mourn
His fate, who this long time he keeps away,
Mourns all the night, and ſighs out all the day;
Grieving yet more, when he reflects that you
Muſt not be happy, or muſt not be true.
But ſince to me it ſeems a blacker fate
To be inconſtant than unfortunate;
Remember all thoſe vows between us paſt,
When I from all I value parted laſt;
May you alike with kind impatience burn,
And ſomething miſs till I with joy return;
And ſoon may pitying heaven that bleſſing give,
As in the hopes of that alone I live.

TO ONE WHO ACCUSED HIM OF BEING TOO SENSUAL IN HIS LOVE.

THINK not, my fair, 'tis ſin or ſhame,
To bleſs the man who ſo adores;
Nor give ſo hard, unjuſt a name
To all thoſe favours he implores.
Beauty is heaven's moſt bounteous gift eſteem'd,
Becauſe by love men are from vice redeem'd.

Yet wiſh not vainly for a love
From all the force of nature clear:
That is reſerv'd for thoſe above,
And 'tis a fault to claim it here.
For ſenſual joys ye ſcorn that we ſhould love ye,
But love without them is as much above ye.

THE WARNING.

LOVERS, who waſte your thoughts and youth
In paſſion's fond extremes,
Who dream of womens' love and truth,
And doat upon your dreams:

I ſhould not here your fancy take
From ſuch a pleaſing ſtate,
Were you not ſure at laſt to wake,
And find your fault too late.

Then learn betimes, the love which crowns
Our cares is all but wiles,
Compos'd of falſe fantaſtic frowns,
And ſoft diſſembling ſmiles.

With anger, which ſometimes they feign,
They cruel tyrants prove;
And then turn flatterers again,
With as affected love.

As if ſome injury was meant
To thoſe they kindly us'd,
Thoſe lovers are the moſt content
That have been ſtill refus'd.

Since each has in his boſom nurſt
A falſe and fawning foe,
'Tis juſt and wiſe, by ſtriking firſt,
To 'ſcape the fatal blow.

THE VENTURE.

OH, how I languiſh! what a ſtrange
Unruly fierce deſire!
My ſpirits feel ſome wondrous change,
My heart is all on fire.

Now, all ye wiſer thoughts away,
In vain your tale ye tell
Of patient hopes, and dull delay,
Love's foppiſh part; farewell.

Suppoſe one week's delay will give
All that my wiſhes move:
Oh, who ſo long a time can live,
Stretch'd on the rack of love?

Her ſoul perhaps is too ſublime
To like ſuch ſlaviſh fear;
Diſcretion, prudence, all is crime,
If once condemn'd by her.

When honour does the ſoldier call
To ſome unequal fight,
Reſolv'd to conquer, or to fall,
Before his general's ſight;

Advanc'd the happy hero lives:
Or if ill fate denies,
The noble raſhneſs heaven forgives,
And glorioufly he dies.

DESPAIR.

ALL hopeleſs of relief,
Incapable of reſt,
In vain I ſtrive to vent a grief
That's not to be expreſt.

This rage within my veins
No reaſon can remove;
Of all the minds' moſt cruel pains,
The ſharpeſt ſure is love.

Yet while I languiſh ſo,
And on thee vainly call;
Take heed, fair cauſe of all my woe,
What fate may thee befall.

Ungrateful, cruel faults
Suit not thy gentle ſex;
Hereafter, how will guilty thoughts
Thy tender conſcience vex!

When welcome death ſhall bring
Relief to wretched me,
My ſoul enlarg'd, and once on wing,
In haſte will fly to thee.

When in thy lonely bed
My ghoſt its moan ſhall make,
With ſaddeſt ſigns that I am dead,
And dead for thy dear ſake;

Struck with that conſcious blow,
Thy very ſoul will ſtart:
Pale as my ſhadow thou wilt grow,
And cold as is thy heart.

Too late remorſe will then
Untimely pity ſhow
To him, who, of all mortal men,
Did moſt thy value know.

Yet, with this broken heart,
I wiſh thou never be
Tormented with the thouſandth part
Of what I feel for thee.

TO A COQUET BEAUTY.

FROM wars and plagues come no ſuch harms
As from a nymph ſo full of charms,
So much ſweetneſs in her face,
In her motions ſuch a grace.
In her kind inviting eyes
Such a ſoft enchantment lies,
That we pleaſe ourſelves too ſoon,
And are with empty hopes undone.
After all her ſoftneſs, we
Are but ſlaves, while ſhe is free;
Free, alas! from all deſire,
Except to ſet the world on fire.
Thou, fair diſſembler, doſt but thus
Deceive thyſelf, as well as us.
Like a reſtleſs monarch, thou
Wouldſt rather force mankind to bow,

And venture round the world to roam,
Than govern peaceably at home.
But truſt me, Celia, truſt me when
Apollo's ſelf inſpires my pen,
One hour of love's delight outweighs
Whole years of univerſal praiſe;
And one adorer, kindly us'd,
Gives truer joys than crowds refus'd.
For what does youth and beauty ſerve?
Why more than all your ſex deſerve?
Why ſuch ſoft alluring arts
To charm our eyes, and melt our hearts?
By our loſs you nothing gain.
Unleſs you love, you pleaſe in vain.

THE RELAPSE.

LIKE children in a ſtarry night,
When I beheld thoſe eyes before,
I gaz'd with wonder and delight,
Inſenſible of all their power.

I play'd about the flame ſo long,
At laſt I felt the ſcorching fire;
My hopes were weak, my paſſion ſtrong,
And I lay dying with deſire.

By all the helps of human art,
I juſt recover'd ſo much ſenſe,
As to avoid, with heavy heart,
The fair, but fatal, influence.

But, ſince you ſhine away deſpair,
And now my ſighs no longer ſhun,
No Perſian, in his zealous prayer,
So much adores the riſing ſun.

If once again my vows diſpleaſe,
There never was ſo loſt a lover;
In love, that languiſhing diſeaſe,
A ſad relapſe we ne'er recover.

THE RECOVERY.

SIGHING and languiſhing I lay,
A ſtranger grown to all delight,
Paſſing with tedious thoughts the day,
And with unquiet dreams the night.

For your dear ſake, my only care
Was how my fatal love to hide;
For ever drooping with deſpair,
Neglecting all the world beſide:

Till, like ſome angel from above,
Cornelia came to my relief;
And then I found the joys of love
Can make amends for all the grief.

Thoſe pleaſing hopes I now purſue,
Might fail if you could prove unjuſt;
But promiſes from heaven and you,
Who is ſo impious to miſtruſt?

Here all my doubts and troubles end,
One tender word my ſoul aſſures;
Nor am I vain, ſince I depend
Not on my own deſert, but yours.

PROLOGUE TO MARCUS BRUTUS.

OUR ſcene is Athens: And, great Athens nam'd,
What ſoul ſo dull as not to be inflam'd?
Methinks, at mentioning that ſacred place,
A reverend awe appears in every face,
For men ſo fam'd, of ſuch prodigious parts,
As taught the world all ſciences and arts.
Amidſt all theſe ye ſhall behold a man
The moſt applauded ſince mankind began,
Outſhining ev'n thoſe Greeks who moſt excel,
Whoſe life was one fix'd courſe of doing well.
Oh! who can therefore without tears attend
On ſuch a life, and ſuch a fatal end?

But here our author, beſides our other faults
Of ill expreſſions, and of vulgar thoughts,
Commits one crime that needs an act of grace,
And breaks the law of unity of place:
Yet to ſuch noble patriots, overcome
By factious violence, and baniſh'd Rome,
Athens alone a fit retreat could yield;
And where can Brutus fall, but in Philippi field?
Some critics judge ev'n love itſelf too mean
A care to mix in ſuch a lofty ſcene,
And with thoſe ancient bards of Greece believe
Friendſhip has ſtronger charms to pleaſe or grieve;
But our more amorous poet, finding love
Amidſt all other cares, ſtill ſhines above,
Lets not the beſt of Romans end their lives
Without juſt ſoftneſs for the kindeſt wives.
Yet, if ye think his gentle nature ſuch
As to have ſoften'd this great tale too much,
Soon will your eyes grow dry, and paſſion fall,
When ye reflect 'tis all but conjugal.
This to the few and knowing was addreſt;
And now 'tis fit I ſhould ſalute the reſt.
Moſt reverend dull judges of the pit,
By nature curs'd with the wrong ſide of wit!
You need not care, whate'er you ſee to-night,
How ill ſome players act, or poets write;
Should our miſtakes be never ſo notorious,
You'll have the joy of being more cenſorious:
Show your ſmall talent then, let that ſuffice ye;
But grow not vain upon it, I adviſe ye:
Each petty critic can objections raiſe;
The greateſt ſkill is knowing when to praiſe.

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